DUELIST #6

THE

DUELIST

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The Official Deckmaster™ Magazine



An Interview with the Designers of *Magic: The Gathering—Ice Age*™

Cluster Decks: Making Combinations Work

How to Teach Magic™ to Your Friends

Card Combinations and Official Card Lists for *Chronicles*™ and *Ice Age*

Also featuring

Magic: The Accessories
A Look at Card Cataloguing Software

Reviews of Rage™, Shadowfist™, and SimCity®: *The Card Game*™

Richard Garfield on the Future of Magic Tournaments

Featuring the art of Rob Alexander

Includes *Magic: The Gathering—Fourth Edition*™ FAQ and Everway™ preview cards

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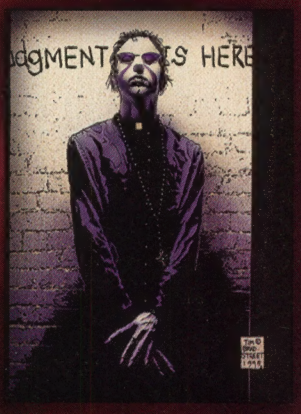

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Table of Contents



Insider's Look

10 Back in Style: *Magic: The Gathering—Chronicles*™
The latest **Magic** release brings back over a hundred of your favorite, hard-to-get cards from **Magic**'s out-of-print expansions. John Tynes fills us in on the creation of this unique expansion.
Backgrounds by Jeff Menges

Deck Building and Strategy

18 Cantrips: Something for Nothing
Ice Age™ co-designer Chris Page shares some of the devious uses for this quirky new type of card.
Backgrounds by Drew Tucker; illustrations by Doug Keith

26 The Elements of Deck Building
Zak Dolan helps you sort out the deck strategy and play style of a **Magic**™ deck.
Backgrounds by Scott Kirschner



29 Cluster Decks: Making Combinations Work
Beth Moursund helps you build a deck that doesn't depend on luck (much) to turn up a winning combination.
Backgrounds and illustrations by Drew Tucker

36 The Anatomy of a Sealed Deck
Do you tune a **Magic** deck the way the game's designers do? Find out as **Magic** lead designer Joel Mick walks you through his strategies of sealed-deck construction.
Backgrounds by Jeff Menges

39 Defrosting the Icy
Michael Ryan and Shawn Carnes share some old tricks (and a few new ones) using the Icy Manipulator, a favorite frustrator that returns in *Ice Age*.
Backgrounds by Amy Weber

Highlights

8 How Magic Was Born
Wizards of the Coast President Peter Adkison reminisces on the unlikely pairing of a small roleplaying company and a game designer with mismatched socks.
Illustrations by Quinton Hoover

12 Report From the Ice Agents
Ice Age playtesters Julie and Stephen D'Angelo evaluate *Ice Age* as a stand-alone game and an expansion, and share their favorite cards from the set.
Illustrations by Quinton Hoover

14 Meet the "East Coasters"
The Duelist talks with the original **Magic: The Gathering** playtesters and *Ice Age* designers.
Backgrounds by Scott Kirschner

44 Have I Got a Game For You
Who says friends don't let friends learn **Magic**? Mark Rosewater offers this step-by-step guide to teaching a novice.
Backgrounds by Scott Kirschner

46 Magic in the Netherlands
Daniel Wixman journeys to the Dutch National Championships and brings back a look at **Magic** abroad.
Backgrounds by Drew Tucker

63 Strange New Worlds
Mark Rosewater shares the thrill of seeing and playing with the first *Ice Age* cards at the expansion's debut tournament in Toronto.
Background by Richard Kane Ferguson

70 Bringing Visions To Life: Creating a Character in the EVERWAY™ Game
John Tynes show you how to create your own hero for Wizards of the Coast's new roleplaying game, EVERWAY.
Backgrounds by Amy Weber

Featured Artist

75 Talking with Rob Alexander
Jenny Scott and Amy Weber interview the **Deckmaster** artist of Rubinia Soulsinger, Twiddle, Web, and Fyndhorn Bow.
Backgrounds by Amy Weber

Industry News and Reviews

86 WotC News
In this issue: **Deckmaster** update; **Magic** price change; **Magic** World Championships; WotC at GenCon; **AlterEgo**™ roleplaying update.
Backgrounds by Heather Hudson

90 The Diviner
J. M. White lists the top ten single card sellers in *Ice Age*, and reports on pre-*Chronicles* collecting activity.
Backgrounds by Sandra Everingham

92 Designers Notes/Reports on Trading Card Games
In this issue: design notes on **Shadowfist** and **Vampire: The Eternal Struggle**, as well as previews of **Star Wars** and other upcoming games.
Backgrounds by Anthony Petrarca

100 On the Town With SimCity®: The Card Game™
Reviewer Allen Varney reflects on what Mayfair has built with its adaptation of the popular computer game.
Backgrounds by Mark Tedin



102 Rage
Rick Swan reviews WhiteWolf's gory and engaging trading card game drawn from its roleplaying game **Werewolf: The Apocalypse**™.
Backgrounds by Amy Weber

104 Shadowfist
Through a fog of medication, Allen Varney reviews this weird martial mayhem game from Daedalus.
Backgrounds by Amy Weber

Regular Features

6 Letters
In our mail: **Magic** overseas; the rarest **Magic** card; and response to "At Issue."
Backgrounds by Quinton Hoover

20 Murk Dwellers
Tom Wylie discusses the murkier aspects of damage side effects. In "At Issue," Tom questions who should bleed whom in **Vampire**.
Backgrounds by Drew Tucker

24 Excuse Me, Mr. Suitcase?
As Paul Peterson explains, a league allows you to create a fair and competitive environment for **Magic**—and forces you to add new strategies to your play.
Backgrounds and illustrations by Julie Baroh

50 Magic: The Accessories
Looking for an electronic way to keep track of your **Magic** hoard? John Bunnell tests out the *Deck Daemon*, *Gamecard Wizard*, *Card Master*, and *Frankencard* cataloging software.
Backgrounds by Mark Poole

58 House Rules
In this issue: fixes for Emperor Team **Magic** rules; league reparations; re-evaluating ante; team sealed-deck rules; and variants from our readers.
Backgrounds by David Kimmel

60 WotC Picks: Chronicles
Magic designers and playtesters offer their favorite cards from the newest expansion.
Backgrounds by Amy Weber; illustrations by Melissa Benson



62 Duelists' Convocation News
In this issue: the DC's new rating system and the new status of Fork and Balance.
Background by Richard Kane Ferguson

68 Lost in the Shuffle
Richard Garfield speculates on the future of **Magic** tournaments and debunks some of the myths surrounding Type I competition.
Backgrounds by Doug Keith

72 What's New with Phil and Dixie
Phil Foglio dances with Mammoths.

74 Artist Announcements
Illustrators for **Deckmaster**™ and *The Duelist* provide contact information, convention appearances, and print availability.
Backgrounds by Amy Weber



110 Magic: The Puzzling
Mark Rosewater presents a trio of brain teasers—"One by One," "Final Blow," and "Four of a Kind"—including two new puzzle formats.
Backgrounds by Anthony Petrarca

114 Magic Tricks
Stop! Don't put Flight on the Farrelite Priest! Find out how to solve last issue's stumpers, "Eeny Meeny Miney Moe" and "High On Life."
Backgrounds by Anthony Petrarca

118 *Magic: The Gathering—Chronicles* Card List
The definitive card-by-card breakdown for the latest **Magic** expansion.
Backgrounds by Robyn Williamson and Amy Weber

121 *Magic: The Gathering—Ice Age* Card List
The definitive card-by-card…you get the idea. Name, color, card type, artist, rarity—it's all here.
Backgrounds by Anthony Petrarca

130 Deckmaster Rulings and Errata
Don't miss this exciting installment of "Wow, is that really how it works?"
Backgrounds by Doug Shuler and Amy Weber; illustrations by Doug Shuler

Check the bag

Included with this issue of *The Duelist* is the **Magic: The Gathering** Frequently Asked Questions list, updated for *Fourth Edition*. You'll also find preview cards for Wizards of the Coast's new AlterEgo™ roleplaying release, EVERWAY™.



Hey, wait a minute!

In the last issue of "Magical Hacker," we mentioned that we'd be previewing the **Magic: The Gathering** computer game from MicroProse in this issue. Unfortunately, we had to delay that feature, but we hope to bring you complete coverage of the game in *Duelist* #7.

Coming next issue

Learn what it takes to make a **Magic** expansion set as we take you behind-the-scenes to the making of ***Magic: The Gathering—Homelands***…See the best **Magic** players in the world duke it out in the 1995 **Magic** World Championships…**Plus:** The art of Mark Tedin; the official *Ice Age* FAQ; and a preview of MicroProse's **Magic: The Gathering** computer game. All in *Duelist* #7—available in late September.

Backgrounds by Amy Weber



LETTERS

Comments? Questions? Send them to :
Letters
c/o The Duelist
P. O. Box 707
Renton, WA 98057-9916
or via e-mail to: duelist@wizards.com

Puzzling over Magic: The Puzzling

Reading *The Duelist*, I always come across the puzzle. As I was starting to evaluate my first move, I came across a complication in "Eeny Meeny Miney Moe." (*Duelist #5*) My draw for the turn is Black Knight, while the only colors I'm dueling with are white, green, and red. Is this a misprint or is there a secret to this puzzle that I have not noticed?

—Chris Wilson
Portland, OR

There are three possible answers to your question, and you can pick whichever one you like: a) the Black Knight was supposed to be a White Knight and the upkeep payment for Conversion (another inconsistency in the puzzle) was meant to be apparent—unfortunately, while the solution for the puzzle was carefully checked, these "background" mistakes accidentally slipped through; b) Nick paid for Conversion with a sacrificed Ruins of Trokair and you have a Black Knight in your deck that you are planning to put into play with Resurrection; or c) somebody let the evil Mark Rosewater do the layout.

Magic™ overseas

I enjoyed many of the articles in *Duelist #4*. The best were "**Magic: L'Adunanza**," "The Art of the Deal," "The Ten Mental Locks of **Magic**," and "The Power of *Fallen Empires*." I would like to see a regular article in the same vein as "**Magic: L'Adunanza**." You could use brief summaries from players and dealers in the U.S. and other countries about what games have sold well, what games have not sold well, and what strategies are in vogue where they are.

—Regina Haynes
Mississippi State, MS

Check out "Magic in the Netherlands" on page 46. We'd love to hear from Magic players overseas about the state of the game in their homeland.

The rarest Magic card

While playing a recent game of **Magic** I was informed as to the rarest of all cards. I was told the name was "Proposal." Is this an actual card?

—Brian Hardin
Memphis, TN

"Proposal" is the Magic card that designer Richard Garfield created to propose marriage to Lily Wu, now Mrs. Garfield. As Richard tells it, he hoped to spring the card on Lily in a game of Magic, but by ill luck it took him many, many games before he could cast the spell. The white sorcery costs four white mana and reads, "Allows Richard to propose marriage to Lily. If the proposal is accepted both players win; mix the cards in play, both libraries, and both graveyards as a shared deck." Designed by Richard Garfield and illustrated by Quinton Hoover, "Proposal" can be considered a Magic card, and the rarest at that. However, less than a dozen were made—color copies of the art were simply pasted on land cards. This brings us to…

Fake cards

I am writing to you about the photocopying of cards and then pasting them on fronts of cards. The other day I was trading for Lord of Atlantis and a kid at my school gave me a fake card. At first I was fooled because I had seen the kid a couple of times and I trusted him. He gave me the card in a plastic sleeve, so I didn't actually feel the card. After I took it out, the card felt a little different, and you could pull down the corner quite easily.

I have seen many kids get ripped off this way, and being a victim myself, I told them right when the trade took place. I have found about three good trading partners with real cards this way.

The best thing to do would be to explain to players what to look for. The first sign is when somebody says they can get you whatever cards you want at prices way below the [going] price. Sometimes people will leave some glue along the side, or the edges won't be cut right (this they blame on miscuts). If they usually just flash the card in front of you or don't let you touch it yourself, it might be a fake. It will have a paper-like feeling, a little different from that of a real card.

—Mike Bublitz
Henderson, NV

Mike has some good advice—we have heard similar reports, and Wizards of the Coast is definitely concerned about this problem. Read WotC News on page 87 for more information on dealing with cards (and card sellers) you may feel are a little suspect.

Backgrounds by Quinton Hoover

More of too much

I enjoyed reading "You Know You've Been Playing Too Much **Magic** When..." in *Duelist #3* [from "According to Mr. Pling"]. I decided to contribute a few of my own (most of which are true, by the way).

You Know You've Been Playing Too Much Magic When...

1. You get in trouble with your parents and think "I'll just Fog them."
2. You play *Uno* and find yourself wishing for a Braingeyser.
3. Your final paper for Religion is titled "The Legend of the Vesuvan Doppleganger."
4. On your English final, you are assigned to write an essay about Emily Dickinson's "Crumbling is Not an Instant's Act" and all you can think is, "Wait, isn't Crumble an Instant?"
5. You come home from college for winter break and don't unpack for a week because you're too busy playing.
6. You would rather walk a mile in the cold than take the "el" to get to your favorite bookstore because by not paying "el" fare, you'll have more money to buy cards.
7. You want to name your Nettling Imps.
8. At dinner, someone asks you to pass a fork and you say, "Sorry, I need it for my red deck."
9. You start writing haikus about cards. (The Basilisk kills/All of my rival's creatures/Just by blocking them.)
10. You start buying magazines like *The Duelist.*

—Amy Elizabeth Dondzila

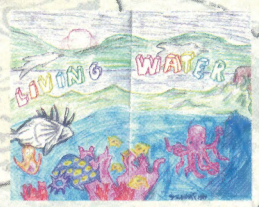


Illustration by Shanna Fish

For experts only

[from the mail bag of Rhias K. Hall, Duelists' Convocation]

I was very impressed by *Duelist #5*...the quality keeps going up, and the articles keep getting better. And I am thrilled to see a "Letters to the Editor" section, at last. I would however, like to point out that you never supplied an address for Letters to the Editor to be sent to. (Though most die-hard fans would know...) As I am too cheap to spring for the stamp, I would like to submit an e-mail to the editor:

In *Duelist #5*, Beth Moursund wrote a very illuminating article entitled "Attack, Attack." I have read the *Pocket Players' Guide*, and as a beginning **Magic** player found the discussions between Mathias and Selene to be an invaluable teaching tool. However, as a more experienced player, I noticed that I would disagree with several of the points that were made. (For instance: Mathias suggests casting a Spore Cloud during the third subphase of the attack, which most of the more experienced players I've played would say was premature...they agreed it would be better to wait until after giving the opponent more opportunities for Giant Growths and/or Blood Lusts, etc.) There were some other nitpicky points, but this is my basic observation: this article was for "newbies".... There was much more material for intermediate and advanced players to muse over (I especially loved the bluffing article by Zak Dolan...as well as the timing observations made by Mark Rosewater), but it was hard to see what articles were appropriate to what audiences. (I just got a friend addicted to the game, and showed him the magazine.... He wasn't familiar enough with the game to understand the bluffing or timing articles, but "Attack, Attack" was very helpful to him.) Do you intend on implementing any conventions to make it easier for readers to see what articles are more appropriate to their skill level (a star system, or something similar)?

—Blackheart
Novice Necromancer

We've debated using a rating system, and often discuss how appropriate the skill level of a given article is. In general, we try to help new players while still including articles useful to more experienced players; usually we can provide a little bit for everybody, but some articles are definitely geared to a certain skill level (Beth's "Attack, Attack" is a good example). As an experiment, we'd like to invite our readers to evaluate the articles in this issue: which articles are advanced, which are intermediate, and which are more appropriate for beginners? Also, assess your own level of play. This information will help us decide if creating a rating system would be useful. (By the way, "Murk Dwellers" is unofficially rated at ★★★★●●●.)

Responses to "At Issue" in *Duelist #5*

Playing cards "as is"

Cards should be played exactly as they read. Only mistakes and misprints should require revisions.

Having several different versions of the same card enhances the flavor and diversity of the game. It makes things more unpredictable and is actually a handicap to experienced players. (Okay, he's playing green and holding back one forest, he's gonna Fog me but which Fog will it be!?) Not all wizards would use the same means to an end. Spells are an extension and expression of the sorcerer's spirit/soul/favorite metaphysical term here.

—D. Taylor
Soquel, CA

Tom Wylie responds:

While we have received little feedback on this topic, the responses we did receive were from players who have been in the game for some time, and their responses generally agree: play cards "as written."

For an experienced player, playing cards as written has some merit. With so many cards to keep track of already, tracking several functionally different versions of a few cards is not a problem. And the concept of a player's (or wizard's) personality being reflected by the chosen version of a card is interesting. So perhaps this is the better approach for experienced players who can keep track of the subtleties of the game.

However, having many versions of a card puts new players at more of a disadvantage. A new player has to learn hundreds of new cards, and having to memorize different functions for a card of the same name just adds another layer of confusion. While it's true that part of the vision of Magic includes being unable to keep track of every single card that exists, it helps make new players comfortable if they know that once they learn what a card does, they always know what it does—whether the card was printed yesterday or two years ago.

Also, remember that cards are updated to clarify their wording, or to fix a rules problem of some kind, or both. For all of these reasons, we are gradually shifting our policy to playing cards as the most recent text is written, or how the card would be rewritten if reprinted recently. This results in the most robust game possible. But playing cards as written—with or without errata—could make for an interesting variant.



Illustration by Emily Alfstad

by Peter D. Adkison

How Magic Was Born

THE STORY OF **MAGIC: THE GATHERING™** IS REALLY THE STORY OF THE GAME'S DESIGNER, RICHARD GARFIELD. OF COURSE, FOR AN ADVENTURE OF THIS MAGNITUDE, RICHARD REQUIRED A LOT OF HELP FROM OTHER PEOPLE. THIS IS THE STORY OF MY SMALL ROLE IN HELPING HIM SHARE **MAGIC™** WITH THE REST OF THE WORLD.



Before I met Richard I was a gaming snob. I primarily played roleplaying games, and I looked down my nose at most other types of games. So when I finally tired of being a systems analyst for Boeing and decided to start a gaming company, it was clear to me that our focus would be on roleplaying games. And, for the next two years, we spent our energies creating Wizards of the Coast as a roleplaying company. Halfway through that time, I met a man who would significantly alter my opinions about games, change the course of Wizards of the Coast, and reshape the future of the entire gaming industry—that man, of course, was Richard Garfield.

I met Richard over the Internet through his close friend and fellow designer, Mike Davis. Mike saw a post I made on Usenet about starting up a new gaming company, and he decided to e-mail me an introduction and a description of a game he was trying to get published. The name of the game was "RoboRally," and he had co-designed it with a friend, Richard Garfield.

I told Mike that we weren't really interested in doing board games because the margins were too slim; the startup costs for a board game are very high, and we were primarily interested in roleplaying games anyway. With that as a caveat, I did agree to take a look at RoboRally and I met with Mike and Richard a few weeks later in Portland, Oregon.

I drove to Portland with my friend and associate Jay Hays, and we found the home of Richard's parents where we had planned to meet. I can still remember my first impressions of Richard: I was standing in the greeting area of his parent's house getting acquainted with Mike while Richard was "getting ready." Because Richard's family had guests over, we decided to go away from the house to talk. Richard looked somewhat confused as he searched for his shoes and kept remembering other things he wanted to take with him. Then, as now, he wore mismatched socks, had strange bits of thread and fabric hanging from parts of his clothing, and generally looked like someone who had just walked into the Salvation Army and grabbed whatever seemed colorful. My immediate thought was, "Gee, I wish I were still in college."

Because Mike Davis had already hinted that he and Richard might be interested in investing money in RoboRally, I was ready to talk about business. I figured Richard would be all set to talk about why we should publish RoboRally. As it turns out, Richard seemed oblivious to the business discussion; he wanted to show off some stock market game he'd been working on, even though he didn't think it was something we should publish any time soon. The message was clear—this Richard Garfield guy loved games. While I'm sure he wanted to get published, he loved games for the sake of games. Even though it seems obvious, I never understood until then that a great game designer would be fascinated by games simply for what they are, not for what could be gotten out of them.

Of course, we eventually did get around to talking shop. Actually, Mike and I talked shop while Richard silently observed. I would learn in the years that followed that Richard doesn't really like to talk about money and business; he once said he didn't have the "constitution" for it. We were able to get Richard's attention, though, when the subject came around to future design work, as he was anxious to demonstrate his skill at designing games. So, being a gaming snob, I asked Richard what sorts of games he liked; I guess I wanted to "classify" him. His response went something like this: "I like all types of games. I like roleplaying games, card games—poker is great—live-action games, charades, basically everything. I must admit I don't tend to like long, drawn-out wargames, although I do enjoy *Diplomacy*™."

Spot illustrations by Quinton Hoover,
Backgrounds by Amy Weber

This response had a huge effect on me—what an admirable attitude! Richard wasn't focused on a particular type of game. His vision was clear and went to the heart of gaming. He was looking for entertainment, social interaction, mental exercise, creativity, and challenge. I suddenly felt stupid, remembering the time I had refused to play *Pictionary*™ even though I knew I would probably enjoy it. On that Saturday in August of 1991, my attitude about games was changed forever. But that wasn't the last time Richard would shake my world.

Richard went on to say, "Describe a game concept—any concept—and I'll design a game around it for you." Now don't get this wrong. Richard is miles away from being arrogant; he's just the opposite, actually. So while this might seem a bit cocky, Richard said this because he loves a challenge. And what could be more challenging than to design a game around some random concept thrown at you?

So I responded by asking Richard to design a game specifically for the convention circuit. I figured a card game would work, since the game would need to be highly portable. I also wanted something with a fantasy or science-fiction theme that would be a nice vehicle for showing off artwork. Above all, I wanted the game to be fast and compact, so people could play it while waiting around at a convention. After hearing this concept, Richard nodded and looked around thoughtfully, and the conversation went on to other things.

After this meeting, I returned to Seattle and Mike Davis returned to Atlanta. Richard was staying in the area for another week, so he agreed to come to Seattle and demo RoboRally at a convention called Dragonflight. After the convention, I introduced Richard to my close friend and associate, Ken McGlothlen. We drove Ken over to Seattle Center so he could run a couple of errands, and ended up waiting for him in a parking garage across the street. While we were waiting, Richard said, "Remember that game concept you described? Well, I have an idea that might work." Richard went on to describe the basic idea of a trading card game—the idea that over the next few months would grow to become **Magic: The Gathering**™.

Every person in a position like mine fears that he or she won't recognize that once-in-a-lifetime idea when it comes along. You always hear stories of the publisher who turned down *Monopoly*™ or the record producer who turned down the Beatles, and I will always thank the fates that I was clear-headed and lucky enough that day to recognize **Magic**'s potential. Of course, Richard made it easy; when he's excited about something, it's infectious. That child-like enthusiasm and sense of wonder come out, and if there's a kid in you anywhere, you get caught up in the idea, too. When Richard described the game to me, I was filled with the sort of excitement I hadn't felt since my first experience with **Dungeons & Dragons**™ back in 1979. I literally started dancing around, whooping and hollering. When Ken returned and heard the idea, he felt the same excitement. Later, after we had dropped Richard off, Ken made what would prove to be a radical understatement: "You know, this game could make a million dollars. Maybe even *two*."

Starting Wizards of the Coast was sort of like getting on a roller-coaster ride—you could never really see what was coming around the next bend. Richard changed the course of the ride entirely, and, for the second time in one week, he dramatically changed my life.

Although we all know now that this story has a happy ending, that was far from certain at the time. After getting me so excited about **Magic**, Richard brought me back to reality with a simple statement: "There's something you should know. I'm not sure that it's possible to design this game."

I asked him what he meant, and he replied, "Well, this game concept is very different from anything that's ever been done. I can't think of anything that's nearly as complex, except perhaps those online MUDs (Multi-User Dungeons). I know it's possible to design something, but I don't know if it will be any good. But I'll give it a try." With that, Richard went on his merry way and the rest of us at Wizards of the Coast charged forward with our roleplaying game ideas for **Talislanta**™ and **The Primal Order**™.

Actually, Richard moved from concept to design fairly quickly. In about two months he had an "alpha" version, and just a short time later he was at "beta." It's incredible to think that the game then wasn't much different than the final result—if you saw the playtest cards, you could probably play with them without a problem.

But it turned out that the initial design of the game was only half the battle. Richard realized that it would be a challenge to develop the game so it would have repeat play value, and so it would play well both out of the box and in a group of friends with several thousand cards available. Fortunately, Richard knew he would need a lot of help testing all of his ideas, and we struck gold again with the famous "East Coasters."

These now-famous playtesters were Richard's fellow students at the University of Pennsylvania. Fate had apparently drawn together some of the smartest gaming minds of our time—the East Coasters enthusiastically tore into the task of not just playtesting, but actually developing **Magic** into what it is today. Here in Seattle we were merely observers, watching the discussion go back and forth over e-mail. Soon names like Chris Page, Dave Pettey, Jim Lin, and Skaff Elias became familiar; over time, each name began to take on its own personality. While **Magic** was being developed and published, friendships were often forged without the benefit of face-to-face contact.

While Richard clearly led the charge, the game achieved its full potential through the efforts of this intelligent and dedicated group of supporters. Richard and many of the "East Coasters" have since relocated to Seattle, allowing for most of the design and development work on **Magic** and other games to occur in our home office. The line between design and development has blurred, and most of our "R&D" team does a little of both, focusing mainly on **Magic**.

Richard has pressed forward, doing what he likes best: designing new games. These days, he's occupied with *Netrunner*™, but sometimes he'll wander off and design some new board game, card game, or dice game, often not caring whether the concept could actually be published. Sometimes he just plays practical jokes on all of us, by reprogramming our computers to talk back or by making everyone speak in third person (including during board of directors meetings). Not only has Richard dramatically changed my life and my attitude about games, but he has affected all of us by giving us **Magic: The Gathering**.



BACK *in* STYLE



MAGIC: THE GATHERING—*CHRONICLES* *has some familiar faces*

by John Tynes

Arcades Sabboth, Chromium, Nicol Bolas, Palladia-Mors, Vaevictis Asmadi...do these names ring any bells? They should. They are the Elder Dragon Legends from the ***Magic: The Gathering***—*Legends*™ expansion set, and they're coming back this summer. They aren't alone, either: more than a hundred of their friends are joining them. You'll find about a dozen or so cards each from the *Arabian Nights*™, *Antiquities*™, and *The Dark*™ expansion sets, plus about seventy from the three hundred-plus cards of *Legends*.

Altogether, they compose this summer's **Magic**™ card set, *Chronicles*™. More than one hundred cards are included in this white-bordered set, which has been eagerly awaited by players and collectors everywhere, and also hotly debated: which cards would be reprinted, and what would that do to the value of the originals? Rumors have circulated that one card or another would be present, but once *Chronicles* hits the stores in late summer, all those questions will be answered. (A complete card list for *Chronicles* appears in this issue of *The Duelist*.)

HOW *CHRONICLES* CAME TO BE

The thought of doing a "Best of 1994" expansion had been floating around the halls of Wizards of the Coast for a while. Many cards from past expansion sets were difficult to find or had become too expensive for many players to afford. Early **Magic** sets had small print runs (compared to later ones) and were not carried by nearly as many stores as they are today. This kind of hit-and-miss availability unbalanced the play of the game, as players with hard-to-get cards had an advantage over those whose local shops didn't carry **Magic** back when those cards were released. So last fall, Wizards of the Coast made plans to make some of the cards available again in *Chronicles*.

The first challenge was determining which cards would be in the set. The selection process was a quirky mixture of careful analysis and gut instinct. The *Chronicles* team decided to skew the set's card mix heavily in favor of *Legends*, the largest **Magic** expansion set prior to *Ice Age*™. *Legends*' diverse and powerful cards make it a very popular set, and as a result, those cards are very hard to find. Because of this, well over half the cards in *Chronicles* are from *Legends*. (In fact, between *Chronicles* and *Fourth Edition*, about a third of all *Legends* cards will be back in print.) In general, cards were chosen because they were well-designed, useful in play, and helpful to the balance of the game as a whole.

Backgrounds by Jeff Menges

Once the cards were chosen, revision work began. **Magic** is a game perpetually in flux, with new cards and new rulings coming frequently. Every card chosen for *Chronicles* was re-evaluated and in many cases edited, re-phrased, or changed in some way. Most of the changes were stylistic, to make terminology and instructions consistent on cards with similar powers. Changes were also made to bring these cards in line with the rules and style established in *Fourth Edition*; thus, cards in *Chronicles* have the new tap and mana symbols.

THREE TOUGH CALLS

Three very difficult decisions kept the company busy for quite a while. One was the name: what should the set be called? *Best of 1994* wasn't a great title, nor was it completely accurate. Names considered and discarded included *Mosaic*, *Tapestry*, and *Archives*. Many others were suggested as well, and not always seriously. *Urza's Private Reserves*, anyone?

The second tough decision was what color the borders should be. We had already decided that each card would retain the original expansion symbol from its set, but should the cards be black-bordered or white-bordered? This topic was debated at great length, and there were passionate advocates of both options. In the end, WotC chose to give the cards white borders since the set would not be a limited edition. White borders would also help distinguish the cards from the originals, and would help preserve the value of the original cards for collectors.

The last hard choice we had to make was whether to include cards from *Fallen Empires*™. At the time that cards were first chosen, *Fallen Empires* was just shipping and it was not yet apparent that the set would be available for a long time to come. It was assumed that by the summer of 1995, when *Chronicles* would be released, *Fallen Empires* would be a memory and the cards would be appropriate to include. But by February, it was clear that we'd be seeing *Fallen Empires* for a while longer, and we decided to take those cards out of *Chronicles* entirely. Because Wizards of the Coast plans to rotate cards in and out of *Chronicles* in much the same way as we do with the basic set, *Fallen Empires* cards may show up in future versions of *Chronicles*.

BELGIUM AND BEYOND

The films for *Chronicles* were sent to our printer (Carta Mundi in Belgium) on April 20—a day ahead of schedule! As the clock ticked and the presses rolled, the rumors heated up. Moxes were coming back! (Nope.) Black Lotus was coming back! (Nope.) And on and on. At WonderCon in Oakland, I fielded questions from several dozen **Magic** players at a tournament, where finding out what cards would be in *Chronicles* was on everyone's mind.

The big question, of course, is what's going to happen to the collector's market. Since *Chronicles* is a white-bordered set, the cards will clearly be different from the originals, so collectors and those who want to build complete sets should still find the originals worth collecting. People who pay big bucks for these cards because they want them in their decks, however, will now have another alternative. We believe that *Chronicles* will help both types of **Magic** fans.

Those who play by Duelists' Convocation tournament rules should know that *Chronicles* will be considered an extension of the basic set. Because *Chronicles* is an unlimited-edition expansion, not a limited-edion one, it will not count as one of the two latest expansions for purposes of Type II tournament competition. Players will be able to use *Chronicles* cards in the same way they use cards from the basic set.

THE FUTURE OF *CHRONICLES*

Wizards of the Coast plans to keep *Chronicles* in print as long as demand warrants it. If we do change the card mix of *Chronicles*, just as we do with the basic set, you may see some cards from expansions after *The Dark* begin to show up. The purpose of *Chronicles* is to keep two steady sources of **Magic** available at the same time, to increase the pool of cards available to players, and to make it easier for new players to get a hold of useful, popular cards for their decks. We hope you enjoy the set and make use of these bits and pieces of Dominia's history to make new adventures of your own.



REPORT FROM THE ICE AGENTS

by Stephen D'Angelo & Julie D'Angelo

MISSION IMPOSSIBLE:
Experiences in Playtesting

Way back at the beginning of time, when *Arabian Nights*™ booster packs were still available to the masses and cards with white borders were still a new idea, we gathered our group of gaming friends and signed up to be playtesters for Wizards of the Coast. One day the summons came: would we test the new **Magic**™ stand-alone expansion, *Ice Age*™? After a microsecond of careful consideration, we accepted the task. We had no idea what we were getting ourselves into!

Ice Age is the largest and by far most complex **Magic** expansion to date. The complexity of the set was apparent when we got our first copy of the card list—a collection of cards which was much different from the final set. During the three-month playtesting period, we spent many hours sifting through the card list looking for cards that were interesting or fun to play. Each time through we discovered a card or combination that we missed earlier. Many *Ice Age* cards seemed useless or weird at first; some were so twisted that it took us weeks to figure out how to use the card well!

It was satisfying to see our playtesting efforts make a difference in the set. Walking Wall once allowed a player to give it +3/-1 multiple times in one turn. A 9/3 wall makes one incredible attacker! The original Snowfall cost only one blue mana to cast and the mana it produced could be used for anything, not just cumulative upkeep. This resulted in one of the deadliest decks we've ever played: with only *Ice Age* commons and land, it won every game by turn seven. Pestilence Rats was another interesting card. Initially, it was just Plague Rats; then the card was changed to Pestilence Rats, with "counts as Plague Rats" in the text. As a result, the card boosted other Plague Rats, but based its power and toughness on the number of *all* Rats in play. A lot of playtesters got excited about the possibility that a Plague Rats deck could be a viable tournament strategy. In fact, Pestilence Rats turned out to be too powerful, and were changed to have a fixed toughness. There were plenty of other cards that changed as the playtest teams showed how powerful the cards could be. We did our best, but *Ice Age* has a lot of twists to it, and we bet people will still be discovering nasty combinations many months from now.

Fortunately for us, not all of the cards in *Ice* Age were new. Many of the building-block cards from the basic set appear in *Ice Age*. While some people might balk at this duplication of cards, we found it incredibly valuable. It made *Ice Age* much easier to play as a stand-alone game, and it made learning deck-building much easier.

ICE AGE ON ITS OWN

Playing *Ice Age* on its own is like playing **Magic** on steroids. The powers and abilities of many spells seem amplified. Powerful creatures fill your hands. Effects that deal more damage or seem more powerful than their basic set counterparts show up with regularity. The game is still **Magic**, but it feels different.

The new rules and features of *Ice Age* contribute a lot to this new feel. Cumulative upkeep is one of the most significant new features, because it acts as a limitation for many of the most powerful *Ice Age* cards. While cumulative upkeep is a pretty good sign of a useful card, it can be tricky to make these cards work well for you. Particularly in limited environments, cumulative upkeep forces you to worry about managing your mana. You may be able to get out something really cool, but you won't be able to keep it in play for very long if it has cumulative upkeep—and while you have it in play, you're using up mana or other resources that could be used for something else. When playing with cumulative upkeep, it is a good idea to play with at least forty percent mana.

Ice Age also introduces "cantrips," cards that allow you to draw a card at the next upkeep. Initially, our playtest group thought these cards were too expensive and did too little. But once we started testing them, we found they were still too cheap! The ability to draw an extra card is a big advantage: it moves cards through your hand, your deck feels smaller, and your winning combinations come up more often. The costs of most cantrips have been increased since the playtest period, but they still are reasonably priced. The extra two or so mana you pay is worth it.

Not all of the flavor of *Ice Age* comes from the new rules. There is a subtle encouragement throughout the set for players to use "friendly," rather than opposing, colors. Many cards have special abilities which can be used only when mana of a friendly color is paid, or when you control lands of an allied type. While this may not seem a big deal at first, it has an almost overwhelming effect on sealed-deck environments. Playing opposing colors has usually made for better balanced decks in terms of powers and abilities, while playing friendly colors has allowed concentration of purpose. *Ice Age* tends to increase the benefits of playing friendly colors and offers fewer options for those playing opposing colors. Players that insist on opposing-color combinations in *Ice Age* are taking a risk and are not getting the most out of their cards.

As well as encouraging certain color combinations, *Ice Age* discourages single-color



Illustrations by Quinton Hoover

decks. There are more "color hosers" in *Ice Age* than there are in the **Magic** basic set, and they are in general more deadly than cards in previous sets. Drought, for example, can completely shut down a black deck—it makes playing Karma look like you're doing your opponent a favor! If you are playing a single color, your opponent may be able to stop your entire deck with one card.

About the only down side to playing *Ice Age* on its own is that the cards are a bit more complex to play with than the basic set (although not much more complex than some of the expansion sets). Tracking cumulative upkeep and dealing with cantrips and other effects can be confusing for a new player.

MIXING IT UP

Many *Ice Age* cards combine extremely well with cards outside of the set. Gangrenous Zombies are just asking to be used with your Zombie Master, and you can build a very fast swampwalk deck with Leshrac's Rite and Evil Presence. *Ice Age* also offers variations on existing cards to give you a wider choice of spells and effects. For example, Incinerate is a combination of Lightning Bolt and Disintegrate, and Dark Banishing is a variation on Terror. And prior to *Ice Age*, there was no artifact that gave a creature trample or first strike. Some other abilities are new to *Ice Age*, and fill some conceptual gaps in **Magic**: Conquer, for example, lets you take control of another player's land. This kind of variety adds to the palette of cards a crafty deck designer can work with.

In addition to the strategies introduced by new card types, *Ice Age* has a number of cards that will affect your existing decks. One such card is Staff of the Ages. This card prevents the use of landwalk abilities, effectively stopping islandwalk and other landwalk decks in their tracks. Another interesting card is Jester's Cap, which allows you to remove key cards from your opponent's deck. This can cripple a deck that relies too heavily on a single card or card combination. Decks that rely on enchantments to damage an opponent get a boost in this set with spells such as Maddening Winds, which can be so nasty that players would rather not play than play our Maddening Winds playtest deck! Other interesting "bleeder" cards include Mind Whip and Seizures, two good cards that work even better together. Anti-creature decks also get a bonus with Soul Barrier and Brand of Ill Omen.

Some new strategies we found while playtesting *Ice Age* included using Portent or Stunted Growth to deny your opponent cards. Either of these can lead to a very frustrated opponent. Other cards, like the summon spell Lhurgoyf, count cards in your opponent's graveyard. This works extremely well with Millstone and Ray of Erasure to increase Lhurgoyf's power while running your opponent out of cards. Finally, *Ice Age* offers a number of ways to peek at the top of the deck, including Portent, Orcish Librarian, and Brainstorm. These can combine well with Vexing Arcanix or Sindbad to get more cards into your hand.

Each new expansion to **Magic** alters the balance of the game, at least until players learn how to deal with new cards and strategies. This is especially true of *Ice Age*. Knowledge of cards from *Ice Age* will offer a distinct advantage to players in the coming months, as the **Magic** environment adapts to the change in the climate.



ALL GOOD THINGS...

We've been through our trial by ice; now we invite you to follow on a trek into the frozen reaches of Dominaria. There's no way we could explain all the cards and combinations we discovered while playtesting—besides, the real fun of **Magic** is in the discovery! Months of challenging fun lie before us. And one thing is certain: once you get into *Ice Age*, your **Magic** games will never be the same!

ICE PICKS

So which are the best cards in Ice Age*? It really depends on what you want to accomplish with your deck, and how you like to play. There are some cards, however, that are flexible and powerful enough to be in a lot of decks. Here are some of our picks:*

- *Despotic Scepter: This card lets you bury one of your permanents—very handy when the permanent has a nasty enchantment on it or has been stolen by your opponent.*
- *Icy Manipulator: A blast from the past, the Icy is an inexpensive way to neutralize a continuous artifact or keep a creature from attacking.*
- *Jester's Cap and Jester's Mask: While not incredibly powerful in unlimited environments, these cards are just so tempting that anyone who can get them will probably try them in their decks. Both let you look in your opponent's deck, which can be worthwhile in itself; the Mask lets you pick a new hand for your opponent and the Cap lets you strip some key cards from his or her deck.*
- *Staff of the Ages: This card offers a cheap way to stop those trespassing landwalkers.*
- *War Chariot: Trample is one of the more effective creature abilities and this artifact lets you give it to one of your creatures. Anyone want to lend me a Scaled Wurm?*
- *Ghostly Flame: Players of red and black decks always fear the Circle of Protection, but this spell makes red and black spells and creatures do colorless damage.*
- *Illusions of Grandeur: Feeling a little down on life? For just a few mana each turn, you can borrow 20 extra life! Just make sure you can keep up the payments.*
- *Krovikan Sorcerer: This little guy may not seem useful at first glance, but he can help break a stalemate or get you off to a fast start by letting you replace useless cards in your hand.*
- *Ray of Command: This card gives you the satisfaction of stealing an opponent's creature and attacking with it, or getting it killed while it defends against your opponent's attack.*
- *Pyroclasm: It's cheap and wipes out all those pesky 1/1 creatures.*

Favorite flavor text, from the playtest version of Icy Prison: "Help! I'm trapped in a **Magic** *card factory!"* •

MEET THE EAST COASTERS

An Interview by Paul Hughes and Kathryn Haines

WotC President Peter Adkison said the company "struck gold" when it found the "East Coast playtesters." Skaff Elias, Jim Lin, Chris Page, and Dave Pettey were graduate students at the University of Pennsylvania when fellow grad student Richard Garfield was playtesting the earliest versions of Magic: The Gathering™. Captivated by the game's design, these four became heavily involved in shaping the game's rules and mechanics. They continued to work with Richard after Magic was released, creating the *Antiquities*™ and *Fallen Empires*™ expansions, developing the core game, and, most recently, refining one of their first creations, *Ice Age*™.

We cornered the East Coasters at home, hard at work on the first expansion for *Ice Age*. Sitting on a floor littered with scraps of paper and Magic cards, we managed to distract them from *NetHack* and Skaff's chicken masala long enough to have a conversation...

***The Duelist*: How did you meet Richard?**
Skaff: We all met him at the University of Pennsylvania. He was working on his Ph.D. in combinatorics, and we were all associated with the math department in different ways. Richard would come around looking for people to play games.

D: What was your first impression of Magic? What state was it in when you first saw it?
S: When I first saw it, it was a deck of about seventy or eighty cards, maybe an inch and a half by two inches. Just one word and one little casting cost. It was actually kind of beaten up because Richard had already been playing with it. That was my first impression. It was fun to play with that deck, but it was pretty limited. It really started to get exciting with the Beta set of cards.
Jim: I got involved with Magic during the Gamma set. I suspect that my initial impressions were like most others; I thought it was a good game, and when I heard it was coming out I thought it would do well, but I didn't think it would become the best-selling game it is. It's sold more than *Monopoly*™, in terms of units, I think.

D: How many versions of the card set were there before it was released?
Chris: There was Alpha, which was two decks; there was Beta, which was a small pool of about a hundred cards; there was Gamma, which was a large pool of 200 or 250; and then there was the final set that went to print. It was called Delta at that time, but no one actually played it.

D: So how did you go from playing the game to actually being involved in developing it?
J: When Richard left Penn and went to teach at Whitman College in Walla Walla, most of us were involved in discussing Magic over e-mail with him. We helped him work out a lot of the problems with the Gamma card set. Time Walk and Ancestral Recall were common cards in the set then! We were inventing new cards and talking about the rules. At that time, there were two or three pages of typed rules, but most of the players hadn't read them. The first time I read the rules was when we were holding a tournament, and Richard was waving some copies of the rules around, and I looked through them, and we discovered some interesting facts about the game—just like we do now when we look though the rules! At that time, most people learned from Richard, and would go ask him questions; if you claimed, "Well, Richard told me it works this way," then people would just say, "Okay."

So we tried to set down the rules more clearly. Banding was completely redone—originally it was sort of like Kjeldoran Elite Guard, kind of making two creatures one creature—and we had trouble explaining what exactly happened. It wasn't tested until the cards hit print.

D: Was it clear from the beginning what the design problems were going to be?
J: Certainly from the beginning we were aware that the timing rules were problematic. We spent a lot of time discussing how the timing rules were going to work. In Gamma, there was no such thing as an interrupt. We invented that sometime between Gamma and when the game actually came out.
C: Targeting and protection from color didn't really come up until after this. Targeting wasn't well-defined; you couldn't cast things for no reason, because we did have Black Vise in the set then, but that was about it.
S: Most of those things were defined



Backgrounds by Scott Kirschner

that fall, after the game came out. That's when everything was in a form pretty much the way it is now.

D: When did you become the core group that worked with Richard?
C: Basically it happened after we kept mouthing off constantly. All of the development was done over magic-l [an electronic mailing list]; first we started looking at it, making lots of comments; then they started to look to us—"Hey, take a quick look at *Arabian Nights*"—then in November we volunteered to do an eighty-card expansion. Then Peter asked Skaff and the rest of us to look over *Legends*... I think that was when we began to handle some design and development. In March, there was the offer to come out full-time because of the trouble communicating over 3,000 miles.

D: So where did the idea for *Ice Age* come in?
J: That spring when Richard came out to Penn, before **Magic** had been released, he asked two separate groups of people to design 300-card sets. We were one of them.
S: Actually, we started working on *Ice Age* before we were asked to.
J: By the summer of 1993, we had one playtest set of *Ice Age*, which was fairly similar to the original **Gathering** set.
C: Actually, a number of cards originally designed for *Ice Age* wound up in the original game: Healer, Pegasus, Warlord....

D: As we know now, *Ice Age* wasn't the first expansion. Where did the idea to do *Ice Age* as a stand-alone expansion come from? How did the idea of an expansion evolve?
Dave: Certainly a long time ago, people thought that what would happen was that **Magic** would sell for six to eight months, and then a new set would come out. At first, it was just going to be global rotations, and then people started to think about expansions, because they wanted something faster than any stand-alone set was going to come out. So Richard whipped together *Arabian Nights*. Then the philosophy changed to doing small expansions and then doing stand-alone expansions.

Originally, also, the idea for hundred-card expansions was that they would play the part of...just throwing together decks that would be mostly these expansion cards, so balance wasn't that necessary in designing. In fact, I have an old message from Richard in which he says that "This is just an expansion, so I'm not going to worry about balance. People will just play it for flavor, and when they get tired of it, they'll stop playing with it." Well, that's not what has happened. People have taken the set as this evolving thing. So 300 cards become 500, and then 700—now it is about a thousand cards or so. And they don't consider *Arabians*, *Legends*, or *Antiquities* to be obsolete—they still want to play with those cards, which makes sense.

D: So how does *Ice Age* fit into that idea of expansions?
C: Well, the question was: How do we get you to play under a new environment where not only are new cards put in, but old ones are taken out? The idea originally was that you'd only play with expansions so long and then you wouldn't play with them any more; that didn't happen. So now you say, "Here's a subset of 300 cards; you can either mix them in, or you can try playing with them in themselves." The original idea was to do *Legends* that way, but the playtest reports were that that didn't work, it was far too defensive, there was some stuff missing all over.

D: What was your philosophy when you designed *Ice Age*—what did you want to accomplish?
J: I think with *Ice Age* one of the things we certainly wanted to do was to encourage multi-colored play, by using cards that cooperate among the colors.
C: We just did things to shake up the environment; we just tried to throw a monkey wrench into the game.
J: Yeah. When we create cards, we do think about how that will change the way people play; not necessarily to break preconceptions, but to have a new and interesting effect in the game. Like...
C: ...Urza's Bauble, Skyknight...
J: ...things that change the environment in a basic way. In the original set, a card that does that is Nether Shadow. Typically when you are playing, you can assume that if your opponent has no creatures out, there's no reason not to attack with all your creatures, because there is no risk. But a card like Nether Shadow changes that; if that card becomes prevalent, then you have to change your thought patterns. So I think we are certainly interested in doing cards that affect the environment in a subtle way. Cantrips are sort of like that...they have a definite effect in that you burn through your deck so quickly.
S: Also, there was some initial thought given to second-order strategies; for example, if you create the card Balduvian Shaman, then all the Circles of Protection are different even though they haven't changed.

D: What are some of the design mistakes you have made?
S: *Antiquities* was a mistake. Not the whole idea of the set, but how many cards affected artifacts, without sitting down and making a serious count of how many artifacts people would actually have.
J: There are certainly cards that, due to our inexperience and even less playtesting time than we have now, have problems. In *Antiquities*, there are certainly quite a number of cards that are overpowered, like Mishra's Workshop and Candelabra of Tawnos. Or Maze of Ith [from *The Dark*™]. It's hard actually to get to the point where you can assess the cards without playing them.
C: The problem was that the first four sets weren't playtested to any great degree—a few cards, but not the whole card set.
J: As time has gone on, we've developed a better understanding; it's more likely now that if we think a card is okay that we're correct. We're doing more playtesting now, because we realize it's important. And we have a lot more people helping us playtest, too.

D: From what you've learned, what are some of the big things that you watch out for?
S: Anything that lets you "net" cards, and mana generation. And cheap creatures.
J: Certainly the most famous design rule that we've set down—one of the few global design rules—is that anything that has a really big effect should never cost less than four mana. Even if it seems so strange that you can't possibly do anything useful with it other than have fun...it's not true, it can be done.
S: There are a lot of cards that wouldn't have to be on the restricted list if they followed that rule.
J: Right. Like Balance.

D: What are some of the basic principles of a good trading card game, now that you've had some experience judging them?
C: First, rarity is not proportional to power. All cards should be useful—
S: All cards should *appear* useful!
J: We also don't like cards that can be ranked strictly. It should be difficult to figure out which cards are the best cards. A 6/6 creature—is that really better than a 1/1 creature that comes out much faster? It takes a reasonable amount of skill to figure out what the best cards are.
C: It should take a couple turns to win. At least a couple turns! It should be reasonably playable out of the box. There should also be a lot of variety in the card set.
J: And there should be a lot of different ways to win, different decks to build. And in **Magic** at least, the small-creature strategy ought to be somewhat viable.
C: And all stages of the game should be exciting—beginning, middle, end.

D: A lot of people are really interested to hear how you come up with cards.

C: We sit in a room until someone comes up with an idea. We usually know what color it is, often we know what commonality it is; occasionally we think we want a creature, enchantment, etc.—what are we missing? Like for *Ice Age*: What concepts are we missing that are in **The Gathering**? Then basically we stare at the wall until someone comes up with something; we kick it around, back and forth; sometimes hold out on one position or another, yell at each other; or sometimes say, "Yeah, that sounds good," or "How about we do this," or "That's boring." Eventually we write up something, or we decide we'll argue about it later and write it down anyway; then we just move on and stare at the next one. Jim, you want to clean that up for publication?

J: Well, there are two basic ways to come up with card ideas. Some of the time—and this was often true in *Fallen Empires*—we'd have a name or theme in mind, and we'd generate ideas from that. That's how all the thallids were created; we just had this idea of fungus—

C: "There's fungus among us—"

J: We were going to do fungus creatures, and what should fungus creatures do? So we invented all these things.

And then a lot of other times, which is probably more common with us, at least, is that we'll have a play theme in mind. For example, we had cantrips in mind, and we tried to come up with as many ideas as we could that had interesting cantrips to them. Same thing with cumulative upkeep.

D: Do you evaluate cards using some system?

C: We don't use formulas. We take what we've done in the past, taking into consideration which cards you shouldn't compare it with—never compare a creature to White Knight or Wall of Wood; you just try to rank it with respect to things. And with really weird creatures you playtest. No, we don't use formulas.

D: What are some examples of cards that didn't make the final cut for *Ice Age*?

C: Copy Enchantment lost it at the rules gate. It's too bad, too. Most of the others I've forgotten.

D: Many players have noticed that some cards have hidden meanings—Nevinyrral's Disk is an obvious example. [The name is Larry Niven backward, because Niven wrote a story that inspired the Disk.] What are examples of those?

J: Well, Citanul [Druid] is just "lunatic" backwards.

C: How about Onulet?

J: Oh, Onulet is a good one. It was supposed to be Onulets, with an "s," because it was supposed to be an anagram of Soul Net. What it did was very Soul Net-like. You have multiple Onulets out and you have the effect of a Soul Net.

S: But the art we got back was just one. Instead of a lot of relatively small artifact creatures, we got a teddy bear the size of King Kong. We were a little upset about that; then we switched the art, so it looked at least like it could be an artifact creature. People kept asking us if we meant Amulet, and was it just misspelled. They said, "What's an Onulet?" We said, "It's a 2/2 artifact creature."

D: Do you feel like there are a lot of people who don't "get" Magic?

C: You don't have to play competitive decks to enjoy **Magic**. As long as you have people at your own skill level you can have fun. You may not get all the subtleties of it, but you can have fun with it.

S: And it's not clear what it means to "get" **Magic**.

J: That's true; we understand more of the principles of **Magic** than other people, but I'm sure there are principles we haven't found yet, and I'm sure there are people that have found them.

S: Charlie's Balance deck, for example, was new to us. [Charlie Catino joined the **Magic** R&D team in early '95.]

D: I'm just thinking about the popular conceptions about what cards are good, what styles of play are superior.

J: I think those are very faddish, actually. There does seem to be a fair amount of copycatting going on. Deck technology is getting much, much better; but it is very interesting. Depending on what area of the country you go to, you'll hear different claims about which decks always win. And also, internationally, you certainly hear different things in different countries about which decks win. What tends to happen is that there are a couple top players in that area and they favor certain types of decks. My personal opinion is that **Magic** is complex enough that it's unlikely that there is an optimal deck.

S: And it's hard to get settled in any one optimal deck, because with Type II tournaments, for example, once a new expansion comes out, it's hard to figure out what to play.

D: How valid is the current tournament structure for evaluating player's skills?

J: The new rating system will be a much more accurate system. I think that Type II competition is a very reasonable test of someone's skill, actually. And I think Sealed Deck competitions are also reasonable tests of a different kind of skill. Type I is a little strange because it is so difficult to get some of the cards that are necessary to be competitive in Type I. I don't have an especially high opinion of Type I tournaments.

D: Do you think Type II or Sealed Deck is a better test of players' skills?

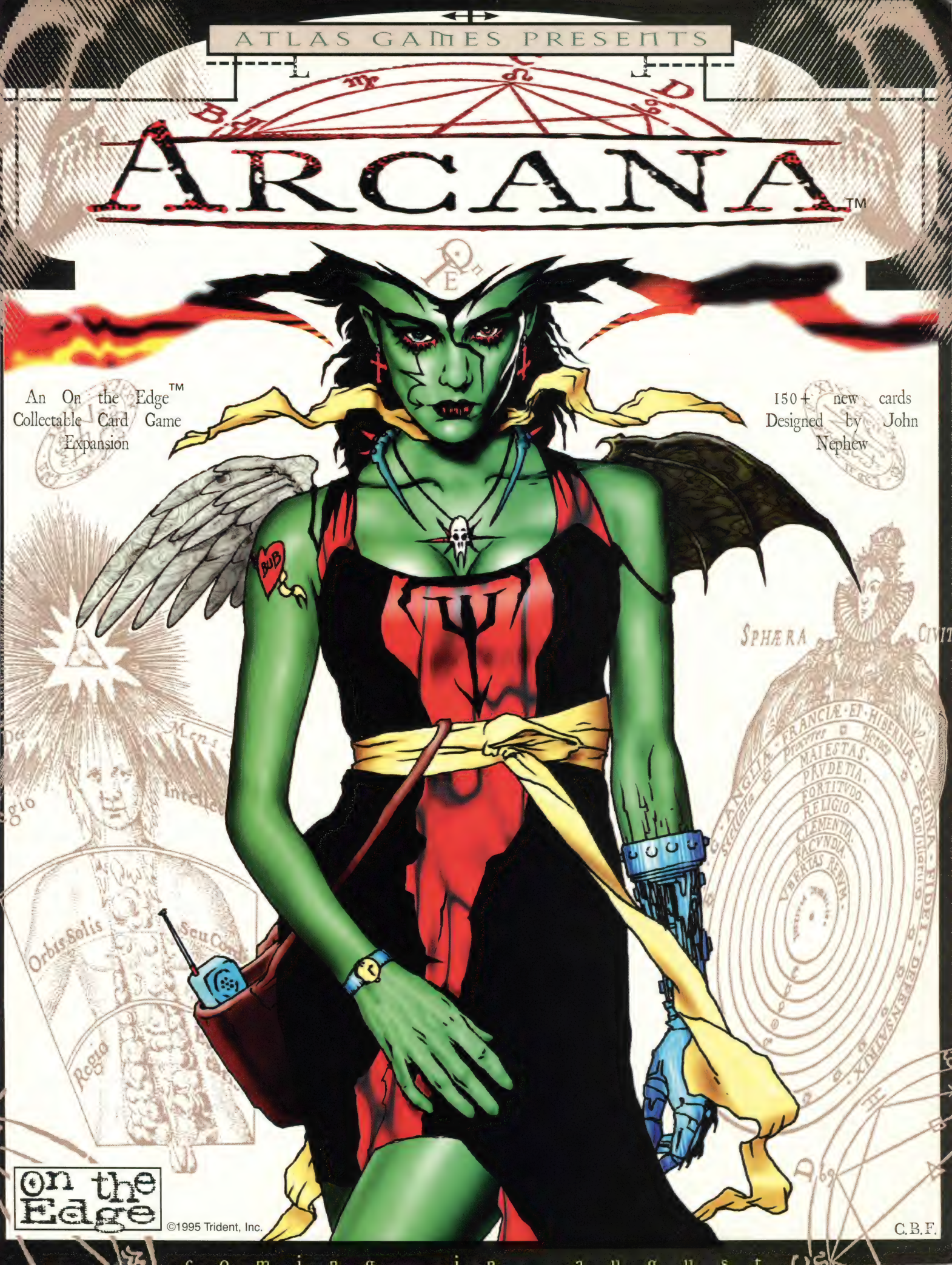
J: Well, they test different skills. Constructing a deck is very different than taking a set of limited resources and stripping it down to the best deck you can get out of it. Type II is still a very large card set, in which you are trying to develop the theoretically optimal deck for you, whereas Sealed Deck is very different; it's more, "This is what I've been given, this is what I get to use." The play styles are different, different strategies are better or worse in the two environments—it's very different.

D: How does Magic compare to other classic games, like chess or Go?

J: It's hard to compare to them because it's not a pure strategy game. There's a much larger random element in it, which means that you can't take the results of any one game too seriously. I don't think that prevents it from being a classic game—like poker, there's a large random element there. Whether it's a classic game or not, I certainly play a lot more **Magic** than chess these days. In my own personal ranking, I rank it higher.

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CANTRIPS:

SOMETHING FOR NOTHING

by Chris Page

I've gotten into my unfair share of arguments over Twiddle. Most people claim it's the best thing going for **Magic** *since sliced Farmsteads. I say it's the most creative way to do absolutely nothing.*

"But you can use your Shivan Dragon for defense after it's attacked. You can keep your opponent's Serra Angel from attacking. You can tap your opponent's Black Vise so you don't take damage."

"And then what?" I reply. "The Angel's still out there. Your opponent will wait till next turn when the Dragon is tapped after attacking. The Black Vise will untap one turn from now."

"But what about..."

THE FAILING OF TWIDDLE

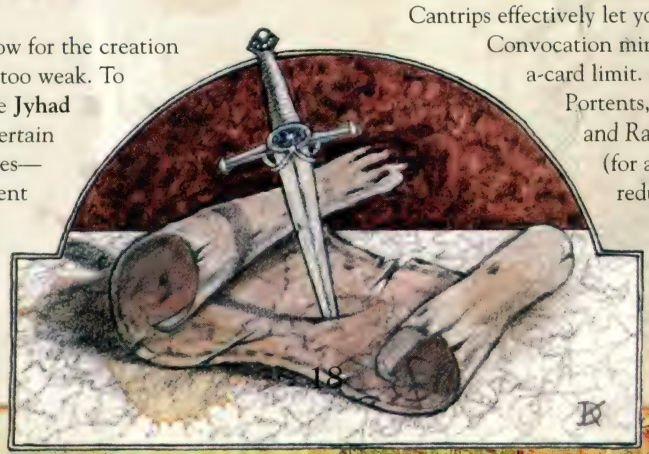
Don't get me wrong. Tapping a card is useful. But not useful enough, and this illustrates the principal failing of Twiddle—it costs you a card. Every card in **Magic** costs you one card, regardless of the mana cost. That's what makes Kobolds and Creature Bond and Wall of Wood and Rust so pathetic. Even though they all cost very little mana, they each could have been a Wall of Air, or Castle, or Wild Growth, or War Mammoth. You only get to draw one card per turn under normal circumstances, so you want that draw to count. And if you're using your card to nullify one of your opponent's cards, you'd better be destroying it permanently with Terror or Shatter or Stone Rain. If you don't, you're effectively letting your opponent take cards out of your hand (and without having to cast Hymn to Tourach).

Ice Age changes all of this with a class of spells known as "cantrips." This was the shorthand name the designers used for spells that say "Draw a card at the beginning of the next turn's upkeep."

The ability to draw new cards, or to use a card repeatedly, is incredibly beneficial. Think of it as the difference between Rod of Ruin and Psychic Purge: Rod of Ruin deals 1 damage for three mana, and can be used repeatedly. Psychic Purge, a *Legends* sorcery, deals 1 damage for one mana, and can only be used once. Although Psychic Purge does have some very specialized uses, I would leave it in my box of cards marked "Wallpaper." Rod of Ruin, on the other hand, I use in my fun decks, and I would even include it in a number of serious decks.

WEAK BY DESIGN

The concept behind cantrips was to allow for the creation of useful spells that might otherwise be too weak. To a certain extent, cantrips also follow the **Jyhad** philosophy that players should have a certain number of cards in their hand at all times—you never know exactly what an opponent can do, but with six cards in hand, he can potentially kill you if you're not careful.



The idea for cantrips predates **Jyhad** completely, though, and even predates the first edition of **Magic**. Cantrips were being discussed over the mailing lists a few months before the final card list for **Magic: The Gathering** was codified. At that point, Richard Garfield was throwing out a number of ideas for new card types, none of which (aside from cantrips) have seen print; cantrips were the simplest, in terms of their impact on the rules, but they were left out to save something for an expansion, to shake up the mix. And, with a lone exception in *Arabian Nights*, the idea remained out of print for well over a year.

Now there are twenty-two cantrips in **Magic**. And although each has only a minor effect, most of the effects are so fundamental that they have a wide range of uses. Think about all the situations in which you might want to deal a point of damage or untap a card. And since you can immediately replace the card, you no longer have to worry about such a use being trivial.

For example, Ray of Erasure allows the precise elimination of one card as opposed to Millstone's two when you're using Orcish Spy or Portents. With Ray of Erasure, you don't have to take out a forest along with your opponent's Sengir Vampire. A more practical use is to drop one of your own cards in the graveyard, like a Scaled Wurm, so you can bring it back with Animate Dead early in the game. Or you could fish through your opponent's deck a bit before casting Spoils of Evil or Spoils of War, or just use Ray of Erasure to flesh out a Millstone deck. In tournament play, however, the most subtle use is to cast it without caring what its effect is.

BREAKING THE SIXTY-CARD BARRIER

Cantrips effectively let you break the sixty-card, Duelists' Convocation minimum on deck size and the four-of-a-card limit. Add Urza's Bauble, Clairvoyance, Portents, Heal, Blessed Wine, Barbed Sextant, and Ray of Erasure to your deck and suddenly (for all practical purposes) your deck size is reduced to thirty-two cards. And a four-of-a-card limit in a thirty-two-card deck is a whole lot better than the same limit in a sixty-card deck. The reason your deck size is effectively smaller is

Backgrounds by Drew Tucker
Illustrations by Doug Keith

that if you can play a cantrip as soon as you draw it, the turn after you play it, you will draw another card. Except for the slight delay between playing the cantrip and drawing the card, it's almost as if you never had the cantrip in your deck at all, effectively reducing your deck size.

The same philosophy applies when you're creating a deck to play for ante. You can take a forty-card deck of really good cards and fluff the deck out to sixty cards with cantrips, leaving the frequency at which particular cards are drawn relatively unchanged. Chances are now much higher that you'll just lose a cantrip or land in ante, and thus protect your more valuable cards.

Urza's Bauble is the purest form of cantrip, symbolizing this concept of cycling—it really only serves to reduce your effective deck size, while occasionally giving you useful information. Urza's Bauble was designed to allow you to play with a smaller deck and cycle through cards faster.

But if you're using cantrips with the sole intent of cycling through your deck, you're forgetting why you want useful cards in your deck in the first place. While speed often wins the game, blindly doing everything you can to speed through your deck is just going to tie up your resources while your opponent pounds you with Scryb Sprites. With cantrips sucking up mana and time to attain a higher cycle ratio, you're casting fewer useful spells in a given period of time (actually slowing your speed ratio down). If part of your hand is always taken up by cantrips, then you have fewer non-cantrip cards to use as the power cards of your hand and fewer options to work with. In a certain sense, you have reduced your hand size, which is one very good way to view cantrips.

Adding lots of cantrips also means having to readjust the rest of your deck. If the percentage of cantrips in your deck starts to get over forty, you'll start to draw cards rapidly enough to fear Black Vise. In this case, you need to convert the excess land building up in your hand into more cards, perhaps with Jalum Tome or Krovikan Sorcerer. That way you can play with a high land percentage to help get you started casting cantrips early in the game, and then late in the game use only cantrips and drill through your deck at an impressive rate. An alternative is to include something that you can sacrifice the extra land to, such as Dwarven Armory. Or you can use the land straight from your hand with something like Land's Edge or a very carefully used Coral Helm.

Cantrips should be treated just like any other spells when you're determining the mana ratio of your deck. While they don't actually count as "true" cards, they are very mana intensive. This applies doubly to cantrips costing more than two mana. There's nothing more sad than having to discard because you can't afford to play more than a couple cantrips each turn after drawing a handful of them. If you're playing a cantrip-intensive deck, towards the end of the game you'll want to be spending eight or nine mana a turn in order to pack a sufficient punch.

PERMANENT DISADVANTAGES

Many of these cantrips have permanent counterparts that duplicate their effects. Rod of Ruin and Flare. Amulet of Kroog and Heal. Blessed Wine and Fountain of Youth. Mind Ravel and Disrupting Scepter. Why play with a one-shot cantrip when you can have a reusable effect?

The first problem is that the permanents still cost a card out of your deck. This is what makes Clairvoyance better than Glasses of Urza. For a better look at the problem, take Enervate versus Icy Manipulator: Both tap a permanent, and both are appropriate for different situations. The Icy Manipulator is best for reliability. If you want to keep your Vibrating Sphere or Howling Mine tapped during every single one of your opponent's turns, Icy Manipulator is definitely the way to go. The major advantage of Enervate is surprise—when an Icy Manipulator is on the table, your opponent is going to leave an extra creature on defense, or an extra mana available for her Circle of Protection. With Enervate, you can surprise your opponent, and suddenly keep her wall from blocking or end her advantage from Mightstone. Or you can tap the Scryb Sprites that just blocked your Shivan Dragon—the Sprites that just had Righteousness cast on them, that is. Surprise is what can often turn the game around for you. At times, this makes an instant like Vertigo better than a permanent like Earthbind.

CANTRIP CATEGORIES

There are several different subsets of cantrips. For instance, certain cantrips are reactive, and you need to be careful about the number of them you put in your deck—Force Void and Heal can only be cast in certain situations and can end up clogging your hand while you wait for better cards. You often only need one or two Heals to save a creature anyway, since they don't usually receive overkill damage. With Force Void, there's only so many times it's worth holding back the three mana required to cast it. Force Void is even worse than Heal in this respect, because you need to keep three lands free instead of just one.

The permanent cantrips are another amusing subset. The two artifacts (Urza's Bauble and Barbed Sextant) are a little different; you get a card when the artifact is used, not when it is cast. That's because they proved to be far too abusive with Hurkyl's Recall. (As an experiment, try constructing a tournament-illegal deck of Barbed Sextants, Hurkyl's Recalls, land, and—of all things—Atogs. You'll find the result very, very bizarre, and instructive.)

The Krovikan Fetish and Pyknite set you up to receive an extra card when they are cast. You can find combinations that let you use the drawing power of these cards over and over again—think of spells like Remove Enchantments, Crown of the Ages, Snow Hound, and Obelisk of Undoing. Any card that either lets you remove a lot of cards at once to your hand, or lets you remove one card over and over, will be effective. The Verduran Enchantress is also quite impressive in this regard. (And the Lord of the Pit can be well-fed by a string of Pyknites.)

The best way to learn about cantrips is to pull out a deck and throw in about twenty of them in place of other spells. Then try playing a number of friendly games with the deck. You'll be amazed at how useful these little cards are. Unlike Twiddle.



Murk Dwellers

by Tom Wylie

"Okay, so I'll attack you with my Hypnotic Specter and Abyssal Specter."
"Well, no blockers...I guess I take the damage."
"That'll be two cards."
"So do I lose a card at random and then choose one from what's left, or do I choose a card to discard and then lose another one at random?"
"Uh...good question."
"It's your *deck. Shouldn't you know how it works?"*

Magic is still an evolving science. New rules sometimes have to be invented as new cards are created, and new card interactions occasionally force us to formalize how certain cards break the rules. *Ice Age*, as you might expect, was no exception. It brought various obscure sections of the rules into light, requiring that they be clarified to answer certain questions. One of the first questions went like this:

"I have 8 life and my opponent has 4. I play Soul Burn on my opponent for 4 damage using only black mana, and my opponent responds by setting off Time Bomb with 8 counters on it. (The caster of Soul Burn gains one life for each ☠ spent to deal a point of damage; when Time Bomb is sacrificed, it deals a point of damage to every creature and player for each counter on it.) Do I win the game with 4 life remaining, or does my opponent take us both out for a draw?"

It turns out that the answer is simple enough in this case: Because Soul Burn gives you life based on how many ☠ you spend to do damage, and it doesn't matter how much damage Soul Burn actually deals, you gain the life as soon as the spell resolves. In this example, you gain 4 life as soon as Soul Burn resolves, since your opponent has 4 life at that time.

Now suppose we replace Soul Burn with Drain Life in the example above. Drain Life only gives life to its caster for damage that is successfully dealt, so it's unclear how much life the caster would gain in our new example: is 4 damage being dealt to a player with 4 life, or is 4 damage being dealt to a player with 0 life? It appears at first glance that you're gaining the life at about the same time that the player you're attempting to damage is losing life. So which life total should be used as the limit?

After briefly trying to figure out why this had never come up before (there must have been a lot of games in which Drain Life was cast while Pestilence was in play, for example), we set out to decide on an answer, knowing that we would have to decide exactly *why* that answer was the correct one. What follows is the result of those arguments…er, discussions: a more or less complete explanation of the side effects of damage, both in terms of when the characteristics of various side effects are "locked in" (as with Drain Life) and what happens when the order of resolving side effects matters (as with the Specters). We will also examine some other aspects of damage dealing as they relate to side effects.

A General Word on Damage Dealing

When a creature, spell, or effect assigns damage to something, all characteristics of that source of damage are "locked in" when the damage is assigned. What this means is that if a green creature deals damage to a player and the creature's color is somehow changed to red after damage is assigned, a Circle of Protection: Green will still prevent the damage (and a CoP: Red will not). This applies to all characteristics of a card: If an artifact is animated and turned blue and it later deals damage during combat, all of the information concerning the source of the damage—the fact that it's blue, and an artifact, and a creature—is locked in when the damage is assigned. If the enchantment animating the artifact is destroyed during damage prevention (after its damage is assigned), this will not stop you from using effects that prevent or redirect creature damage (e.g. the effects of Kjeldoran Royal Guard or Veteran Bodyguard).

Note that only the characteristics of the source of the damage are locked in when the damage is assigned. The characteristics of any side effects that depend on that damage are locked in at the end of damage prevention. For example, El-Hajjâj is a creature that, as a side effect of damage, gives its controller 1 life for every point of damage it deals. For the purposes of the side effect, the controller of El-Hajjâj isn't determined until after damage prevention. If its controller changes after damage dealing and before the end of damage prevention, then the new controller becomes the beneficiary of the side effect.

What Exactly Is a Side Effect?

Any effect that only occurs when something deals damage, or otherwise depends on damage being dealt, is referred to as a "side effect." There are many examples of side effects: Drain Life gives its caster life based on the damage it deals; Backfire has the side effect of damaging the controller of the creature it enchants if the creature deals damage to the caster of Backfire; Hypnotic Specter forces any opponent it damages to discard one card; Sengir Vampire has the side effect of receiving a counter after something it damages goes to the graveyard.

Backgrounds by Drew Tucker

Side effects only occur if damage is successfully dealt. For example, Hypnotic Specter doesn't force a discard if its damage is prevented by Circle of Protection: Black, and the amount of life that El-Hajjâj grants is reduced if some of his damage is prevented with Healing Salve. Completely preventing an instance of damage eliminates any side effect of that damage; for example, effects that reduce damage to 0 (e.g. protection from a color, Prismatic Ward) will also eliminate any side effect of that damage. Redirecting damage will cause the damage's side effect to be applied to the new recipient of the damage, so using Jade Monolith to redirect damage to yourself from a creature blocking a Hypnotic Specter will force you to discard (if you do not prevent the Specter's damage or redirect it again somewhere else).

Applying side effects

Because side effects require that the damage be successfully dealt, they are not generated until the end of damage prevention; this is the soonest you can know whether damage has been prevented or not. Furthermore, the source of the side effect must still be in play at the end of damage prevention in order for the effect to resolve. So if a Spirit Link is somehow removed from play during damage prevention, it can't give you life at the end of damage prevention.

Because a side effect is generated at the end of damage prevention, all of its characteristics are locked in at that time. For instance, in the earlier example using El-Hajjâj, not only is the controller determined at the end of damage prevention, but it is then that you determine how much life El-Hajjâj is able to give. The life gained using Drain Life would also be calculated at the end of damage prevention.

Side effects (and all other effects that occur at the end of damage prevention) follow the same procedure as most "triggered" effects. ("Triggered effects" are effects that are contingent on some other effect; El-Hajjâj's effect is triggered because it is contingent on how much damage El-Hajjâj deals.) All side effects controlled by the active player are applied before any effects controlled by the opponent. Each player chooses the order in which his or her side effects resolve, and each side effect resolves completely (if possible) before going on to the next one.

If any side effects redirect damage to a new victim, or generate new damage, this damage is handled during a second damage-prevention step following the one that just ended. Damage which is automatically redirected to a creature or player, such as damage from trample or the damage absorbed by a Veteran Bodyguard, would also be handled during the second damage-prevention step. This second damage-prevention step handles any and all damage that is generated or redirected in a given damage-prevention step; separate effects do not create separate damage-prevention steps. (Any damage generated or redirected at the end of the second step would be resolved in a third damage-prevention step and so on.)

All effects that are triggered by damage being successfully dealt, including side effects, are applied before any creatures are put in the graveyard, and before any life totals are reduced as a result of damage.

Rulings on specific cards

So what does all of this mean? Here is how these rules apply to various side effects:

Backfire: Backfire can only deal damage if it is in play at the end of damage prevention, and only triggers off of damage successfully dealt to the player who controls Backfire at that time. The damage dealt by Backfire will be assigned to the player who, at the end of damage prevention, controls the creature Backfire enchants—this may or may not be the player who controlled the enchanted creature when damage was assigned.

Chain Lightning: "Bouncing" the effect to a new target is considered a side effect of the damage, so a player may only spend ➲➲ to bounce the effect if the damage is dealt successfully. Each time the damage is bounced, the damage is handled in another damage-prevention step.

Drain Life/El-Hajjâj: The limit on how much life can be gained is not determined until the end of damage prevention, when you know where damage is being assigned and what final toughness ratings and life totals are. The amount of life gained is equal to the amount of damage successfully dealt, or the limit described by Drain Life or El-Hajjâj, whichever is less.

Hypnotic Specter/Abyssal Specter: The discard effect is ignored if the player receiving the damage has no cards in hand when damage prevention ends. If multiple Specters successfully deal damage at the same time, the side effects of the active player's Specters occur first, and each player chooses the order in which the side effects of his Specters occur, ignoring any Specter that didn't damage a player.

Nafs Asp: Whenever Nafs Asp damages a player, a side effect is generated which will damage that player during his or her next draw phase unless that player spends one mana before then. However, the Asp must be in play at that time for the damage to be dealt, and all characteristics of the damage are locked in at that time. Note that damage dealt by Nafs Asp's side effect will cause the side effect to trigger again on the next draw phase, if the Asp is still in play and the damaged player hasn't spent one mana to prevent the side effect.

Spirit Link: At the end of damage prevention, Spirit Link gives its controller life equal to the damage successfully dealt by the creature it enchants at that time.

Sengir Vampire: The ability only triggers if it successfully deals damage to a creature that is sent to the graveyard. Redirecting damage to or away from creatures can change whether Sengir Vampire receives counters.

Veteran Bodyguard/Martyrs of Korlis: Because you get the chance to prevent damage dealt to you before it gets redirected to a Bodyguard, the redirection effect triggers at the end of damage prevention. The damage is processed again during a second damage-prevention step. If multiple Bodyguards could absorb damage that is successfully dealt to you, you choose one of those Bodyguards, and all appropriate damage is absorbed by that Bodyguard, with the remaining damage being deducted from your life total. Also, remember that the characteristics of the damage are locked in when the damage is assigned, so changing the nature of the source during damage prevention won't change which Bodyguards can or can't absorb damage.

Regeneration is not allowed!

A handful of cards have effects that say that if that card or some other source damages a creature, the damaged creature cannot be regenerated that turn. For example, "No creature damaged by Incinerate can regenerate this turn." Unfortunately, these effects present a slight problem when examined in light of the rules for side effects—it's possible to read the cards as saying that preventing regeneration is a side effect of such damage. This would mean that the effect would not occur until the end of damage prevention, and the creature could have regenerated *during* damage prevention. That's not very useful, and certainly not in the spirit of these cards. Therefore, the following three cards have errata:

Bone Shaman: 💀: Until end of turn, no creature assigned damage from Bone Shaman may regenerate this turn.

Incinerate: Incinerate deals 3 damage to target creature or player. That creature cannot regenerate this turn.

Runesword: 3, 🜂: Target attacking creature gets +2/+0 until end of turn. Until end of turn, no creature assigned damage from that creature may regenerate this turn; if such a creature receives lethal damage this turn, remove it from the game. If target creature leaves play before end of turn, bury Runesword.

Note that because of the errata to these cards, they will stop a creature from regenerating even if the damage to that creature is automatically reduced to 0. Also, since the effects are no longer considered side effects of damage, redirecting damage from a creature damaged by one of these sources does not allow that creature to regenerate. (And redirecting damage to the creature won't stop it from regenerating.)

Effects that count up deaths

Certain cards have the potential to destroy or bury several permanents, and then have an effect based on the number of permanents put into the graveyard in this way. For example, Volcanic Eruption destroys X target mountains. It deals 1 damage to each creature and player for every mountain put in the graveyard. Effects such as these trigger when the permanents are actually put into the graveyard, occurring at the same time as the effect of a Soul Net. If such an effect deals damage or causes further destruction or burial, a second damage-prevention step occurs.

At Issue: to bleed or not to bleed

Magic isn't the only game with confusing rules questions. While the rules system for **Vampire: The Eternal Struggle** (formerly **Jyhad**) isn't anywhere near as complex as that of **Magic**, it still has a few murky areas where the best answer isn't always evident. Directed bleeds expose one such area, where the rules governing bleeds and the rules governing directed action appear to be at odds.

The rulebook essentially defines the basic bleed action as a (D) action usable only against your prey. Combined with the rule that the prey of an ousted player gets 6 pool regardless of who eliminated that player, this rule encourages players to focus on their prey. Without this incentive, players might spread their efforts around to simply eliminate the most dangerous player or to play kingmaker (or in the case of **Vampire**, princemaker).

The rulebook also specifies that (D) actions may be taken against any player. Normally there is nothing strange about this; for example, there's no particular reason why Grave Robbing or Cryptic Mission should only be usable against one's prey.

This brings us to (D) bleed actions such as Computer Hacking or Legal Manipulations. There appear to be two underlying rules to such cards, and these rules conflict. On one hand, the normal bleed is only usable against your prey, so it seems that this should propagate through to any sort of bleeding action. On the other hand, (D) actions are normally usable against anyone, and the bleed rules don't actually come out and say "all bleeds are only usable against your prey." Is this a case of the specific rule (bleeds) overriding the general rule (directed actions), or a case of the general rule drowning out an implicit exception?

The official ruling is that the general rule for directed actions such as Computer Hacking overrides the implicit exception given for bleed actions. From the standpoint of rules interpretation, the reason behind this ruling is that the rules for bleeds do not, in fact, say that you can never bleed anyone but your prey. From the standpoint of promoting game balance, this ruling recognizes that it is sometimes desirable to be able to strike at someone other than your prey. Maybe the only way to slow your predator down is by forcing her to be wary of your grand-predator; maybe one player will run away with the entire game unless everyone gangs up to stop him.

In any event, the game is much more interesting if you know that you *could* be bled by anyone, not just your predator. With this ruling, a player can decide that it's worth diluting the attack on her prey to knock you down a peg, or to oust you. While it's true that this could have been accomplished with one or two bleed cards that explicitly allowed bleeding anyone (as opposed to a whole class of cards that allow this), there would have been a rush to acquire those particular cards, and we were trying to avoid that phenomenon when we designed **Vampire**.

The argument against this ruling is that the bleed rules are intended to encourage you to concentrate on your prey, and this should be maintained in all cases except when a card explicitly allows you to harm another player. Proponents of this viewpoint often argue that being able to bleed anyone hurts the game, since it introduces too much randomness and allows players to help or eliminate a player arbitrarily. These players often cite certain vote cards as being undesirable for similar reasons; for example, they disapprove of being able to use Parity Shift on any player who happens to be stronger than you.

The question is: Should you be able to direct (D) bleeds at any player? Or should you have to focus at all times on eliminating your prey and defending against your predator?

The Duelist invites your comments on this issue. Send your thoughts to: **At Issue, c/o *The Duelist*, P.O. Box 707, Renton, WA, 98057-0707.**

«the eye was rimmed with fire...
and the black slit of its pupil opened
on a pit, a window into nothing.»

-the Lord of the Rings



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excuse me, Mr. Suitcase?

IN LEAGUE WITH MR. SUITCASE

Now you've done it. You've developed a fearsome reputation among your friends as a ***Magic***™ *expert. This might have something to do with the fact that all of the decks you own consistently beat them. Or maybe it's the fact that you can strip a starter deck down to a viable play deck in less than five minutes. It could even be all of those recent tournaments you've done so well in. Whatever inspired this reputation, it now seems to have gotten you into some difficulty. You were playing* ***Magic*** *with Mr. Suitcase and some other friends when the idea of forming a league came up. This sounds great, but you're so used to playing in wild environments that you don't know the first thing about playing in a league. What should you do?*

by Paul Peterson



Leagues are a great way for you and your friends to play **Magic**, particularly since everyone involved has an equal shot at acquiring the cards available in the environment; this starts everyone off on an equal footing—including Mr. Suitcase. Also, because the environment is limited, it's quite easy to keep out many of those cards that give an unfair advantage to one player. Instead of victory going to whomever owns the best cards, game play and deck construction will be much larger factors in determining who wins any given game.

As significant as the leveled playing field is, leagues also provide a great social environment. Participants get to play a healthy number of games against a variety of opponents over a reasonable period of time. This is particularly true when most or all of the league members can commit to meeting and playing regularly. A general air of good spirits prevails in leagues; every player is a full participant and has an equal chance to win.

So the big question is: how do you construct a deck for a league? The answer depends heavily on what type of league you're playing in and what selection of cards you have to play with. Certain ground rules, however, remain constant. For instance, in a limited environment, you should restrict yourself to two or three colors (although playing two or three key cards in a fourth color, with three or four lands to support them, works well). Any more than this can make it difficult to get the land you need to cast your spells. Another thing to keep in mind is that the value of cards in a limited environment is drastically changed; some cards, like Fireball and Ghost Ship, become much more powerful. In an unlimited environment, these cards are merely okay, primarily because other cards are either superior to or serve to limit the usefulness of these normally average cards. In the limited environment, however, there are fewer of these types of cards, so the power of a card like Fireball increases dramatically.

Backgrounds and spot illustrations by Julie Baroh

Furthermore, creatures are a much more valuable commodity in general in a limited environment. Many games will be won or lost based on creature damage alone.

Most of your deck construction and game play strategies in a league are going to be influenced by the league format you choose. First, you have to decide how each player is going to receive the cards that he or she must turn into a league deck. The easiest way to begin a league is to use sealed *Fourth Edition*™ or *Ice Age*™ starter decks. Each player gets a deck that can be stripped down to forty cards for play. Players may also receive a booster pack or two from either the basic set or from any of the **Magic** expansions. This extends the range of cards available and adds more flavor to the card mix. Because expansions and basic set boosters do not contain basic lands, players are usually allowed to add some additional basic lands to make up for any deficiencies in their original starter deck. Often this addition is limited to four lands of the player's choice; this limit adds to the challenge of determining precisely the balance that goes into a play deck. Thus, in this type of league, constructing a deck is as simple as stripping a starter deck.

Another way to get the cards to the players is to hold a draft. Collect about sixty to eighty cards, including land, for each person in the league. You can do this by acquiring starter decks and boosters, or just boosters and additional land (or you could convince Mr. Suitcase to donate them; you *know* he has them!). These cards form the common pool from which players will draft. Of course, there are many different types of drafts—so many, in fact, that I'm only going to elaborate on two of my favorite ones here.

One type of draft is what I call a Straight Draft. Get everyone in the league together and put all of the cards together in a pool. Each player then takes turns selecting cards; you can do this one or more cards at a time. It is very important to alternate who goes first in this type of draft—if the same person always goes first, then he or she always has the best selection in each round of choices. You might also wish to periodically change the order in which players choose cards. This will prevent a person from getting stuck behind someone who is attempting to draft the same colors as he or she is.

To build a deck in this kind of league, you'll usually want to look through all of the cards in the pool and choose some specific cards that you would like to play with. When your turn comes around, choose whichever of these cards are still available. This will quickly determine the colors you will be playing. Once you have your colors, narrow your choices to cards in those colors that will help your deck the most.

My favorite drafting system is the Queue Draft. Put all of the cards together into a stack, face down. Then turn each one face-up and place them on the table in a line (hence the name Queue Draft). This line should be one card longer than the number of people drafting. (This system works best with a minimum length of about six cards; that is, five players in the draft. If you have more than six or seven players in your league, I recommend splitting up into multiple groups, and conducting a Queue Draft with each group.)The draft works like this: each card in the line costs a decreasing number of points. In a five-person draft, the first card in the line (the last card turned up) costs six points, the second card costs five points, the third card costs four points, and so on. Each player begins the drafting process with sixty points and must choose sixty cards, including land, with which to build a deck. Players take turns choosing a card from the line. Once a card is chosen, all the cards before the chosen card move down one position in the line, and a new card is added to the front of the line, in the most expensive slot. The last card in the line is free; if a player chooses not to pay for a card in the line, he or she must take the card in the free slot. Since each player must draft sixty cards, a player that chooses to draft a more expensive card will have to take a bunch of cards in the free slot to make up for the points spent. (For more information about the Queue Draft, refer to "House Rules" in issue #5 of *The Duelist*.)

Strategy is important here. Conserve your resources whenever possible. If you have a choice between a Disintegrate that will cost you six of your sixty points and will force you to take five bad cards later, and a Hill Giant for one point, the Giant may be a better choice. On the other hand, if you have been saving your points, then you may well be able to afford to pay for that Disintegrate. Whenever you can, take decent free cards. This will give you more points later in the draft, when other players may be short on points. You might get a good card cheaply because no one else wants to, or is able to, pay for it.

Now that you have your cards, it's time to play your league games. Once again, there are strategies unique to the league system. Whenever possible, you should tune your deck to account for your opponent's colors. Remember that all the cards which you didn't include in your deck are your sideboard; you're not restricted to just fifteen cards. This makes it much easier to tune your league deck specifically for each deck that you play against. If you aren't playing white and discover after playing a game with an opponent that he or she is playing white, then you can zero in on any cards you have that will hurt white, like Flashfires or Gloom. And, of course, you may also want to strip out cards after your first game with an opponent; after all, your Terror isn't much use if all of your opponent's creatures are black, so it shouldn't clutter up your deck.

The order in which you play people in the league can also be important, especially if your league plays for ante. Some leagues are organized very strictly and establish exactly who you are to play and in what order you are to play them. Most, however, offer more freedom of choice. The key here is to identify the best players (like Mr. Suitcase) and those who received the best cards in their deck or draft. Once you know this, the basic strategy is to avoid playing them as long as possible. This will give you a little time to (hopefully!) win some cards to improve your deck. Then when you have to play those powerful players, you'll be a little more prepared to face them.



Whichever format you decide to run and whatever strategies you choose to employ, a league is a great way for a bunch of people to play in a limited environment. And who knows? You might even have a chance against Mr. Suitcase.



The Elements of Deck Building

BY ZAK DOLAN

Whether you've built one **Magic**™ *deck or one hundred, certain principles always hold true. Beginning players will notice the obvious—for instance, the more cards you have in your deck, the less control you have over what you're going to draw. But through hours of building and tuning decks, experienced players learn more subtle points, allowing them to master the elements of deck building. Understanding these elements is the key to creating a strong deck, and applying this knowledge carefully will help you choose a style for your deck and the right cards to support that style.*

Backgrounds by Scott Kirschner

Choosing a deck style

Offensive vs. defensive

The basic goal of every deck is simple: to defeat your opponent. Different people take different approaches to doing this. Some players go for the throat with an offensive deck, attacking relentlessly and hoping that their opponent will be too overwhelmed to do much more than delay defeat. Other players go with a defensive deck, countering their opponent's strategies while building up to a kill that's impossible to stop. When you build a deck, decide which style of play you prefer—otherwise you'll be fighting your deck as well as your opponent. Players who prefer an offensive approach will often make poor tactical decisions with defensive decks; on the other hand, players who prefer defensive decks will tend to hold back with an offensive powerhouse, giving their opponent time to set up a defense. Settle on either an offensive or a defensive approach before you build your deck—creating a deck that is strong on both offense and defense is very difficult, and often puts the cards in your hand at cross-purposes.

Zones of attack

The second important decision to make is how you're going to attack your opponent. Whether you've chosen an offensive or defensive style, you still have to know how to get to your opponent and be aware of how your opponent can get to you. There are several ways to go about attacking an opponent; in addition to the crude tactic of just dealing lots of damage, you can attack your opponent's library, empty her hand, counter her spells, remove anything she gets into play, or eliminate key cards from her graveyard. Since most cards focus on one of these "zones" of attack, deciding which zones you will focus on will help determine what to put in your deck.

For each zone of attack, there are generally two approaches to take: remove the cards in that zone, or stop the cards from being used. For example, Shatter removes an artifact in play, but Artifact Blast stops it from ever getting into play. Artifacts can usually be used once before being destroyed by Shatter, and some artifacts only need that one window of opportunity. Artifact Blast stops even the one-shot artifacts from being used, but can't help once an artifact is in play. The approach you decide to take will have a profound impact on how you organize your attack.

With an offensive deck, attacking in just one zone is generally a mistake—for example, concentrating only on cards in play generally won't result in your opponent taking damage, but focusing only on damaging your opponent won't be enough if you can't get rid of cards in play. If you do focus on only one zone, attack the zone with a mix of destruction and denial.

In the same way, a defensive deck should be able to protect against more than one zone of attack. At minimum, a defensive deck should be prepared for three zones, possibly four or five. (Sideboarding will allow you to balance your defenses as necessary.)

A good offense...

The cards in a typical offensive deck are dedicated to doing damage rapidly and in large amounts. These decks often count on speed, killing an opponent before a defense can be set up or a counterattack can be launched. One of the best offensive decks I've seen—a tournament winner—had only two defensive spells in it: Chaos Orb and Control Magic. (And both were mostly used as offensive weapons!)

The quick attack is the biggest strength of an offensive deck. Using a high percentage of mana and spells with low casting costs will ensure that you can cast your spells as you draw them. Don't leave your deck vulnerable, either—deliver damage from multiple colors and multiple sources (creatures, artifacts, enchantments, sorceries, and instants) so a single spell can't knock out your entire offense.

The sideboard for an offensive deck should be used for surprise rather than for adding defense. For example, if you play a creatureless deck, put a few creatures in the sideboard. After the first game or two, your opponent will sideboard out all of his creature defenses; in the next game, bring in your creatures—surprise!

...is not the best defense

All of the cards in a good defensive deck are designed to stop an opponent from doing anything. The deck should be able to keep an opponent paralyzed indefinitely once it gets going. I've seen one defensive deck (another tournament winner) that had only two ways of doing damage: a pair of Serra Angels. Note that even the choice of offense in the deck is defensive—since Serra Angel flies and does not tap, it makes a great blocker.

Cover as many bases as possible when you create a defensive deck—try to defend against direct damage, hordes of small creatures, large creatures, flying creatures, artifacts, enchantments, and so on. Look for opportunities to slow your opponent down (by using Kismet, for instance), so he won't be able to kill you before you've set up your impenetrable defense.

A defensive sideboard should help you increase your protection against specific threats. For example, if you're worried about enemy artifacts, put in Dust to Dust; if you're vulnerable to enemy creatures, put in Moat. If your opponent is relying too heavily on one particular type of spell, this will allow you to increase your defense against that spell type. A good sideboard can, if necessary, abandon one line of defense entirely to cover a vulnerability.

Active vs. reactive

Most successful decks have a strategy that can be characterized as either active (aggressive) or reactive (passive). Active decks are designed to take action directly against an opponent, while reactive decks respond to an opponent's actions. For example, an active deck would use spells like Sengir Vampire, capable of initiating an attack; a reactive deck would contain spells that would counter the Vampire as it is being cast or control or destroy the Vampire once it is in play.

When playing a reactive deck, realize that your opponent might not always do what you expect. For example, if your opponent doesn't cast an enchantment, your Power Leak becomes useless, sitting in your hand turn after turn. Beware of having counters for cards that your opponent isn't playing. Cards that allow you to cycle useless cards out of your hand (such as Winds of Change or Ring of Renewal) make good additions to reactive decks.

When playing an active deck, be aware of cards that your opponent can easily turn on you. For example, if you play Force of Nature, watch out for Winter Orb, Meekstone, and Spirit Link. Consider sideboarding a way to get rid of cards before they can be turned on you (like Diamond Valley), and you'll be better off in the long run.

The struggle for resources

In **Magic**, there is a continuous struggle for resources, both the number of cards available to be cast and the amount of mana available with which to cast them. If you can continually increase your resources while decreasing your opponent's resources, you will eventually win.

If you can add one to your available mana every turn (by using Land Tax or Fastbond, for example) and subtract one from your opponent's available mana each turn (using Demonic Hordes), it won't be long until you can cast anything you want and your opponent can't cast anything at all. In the same way, if you can get an extra card every turn (for instance, using Jayemdae Tome) and take away one of your opponent's cards every turn (using Disrupting Scepter), eventually you'll have a full hand and your opponent won't have any cards available.

Choosing cards to support your deck style

Analyzing each card

Once you've determined the style of deck you want (whether it will be offensive or defensive, what zones it will focus on, whether it will be active or reactive, etc.), you need to begin analyzing individual cards

to determine which will best support the style you've chosen. Look at a card's destructive power, efficiency, mana economy, target selection, and flexibility.

Destructive power is a measure of how many cards a particular card can destroy. Tranquility, for example, is more destructive than Disenchant since it can be used to take out several enchantments instead of just one. The power of highly-destructive cards can be maximized by using ones that won't significantly hurt you—for instance, Tranquility used in a deck that doesn't have any enchantments.

Card efficiency measures how many of your opponent's cards you can take out per card of your own. For example, Ashes to Ashes can be used to take out two cards, making it more efficient than Terror. (Relying on multi-targeted effects, however, can be risky; Ashes to Ashes doesn't help much if there's only one creature in play.) The cards that are often the most efficient are those which can be used turn after turn to take out an unspecified number of your opponent's cards (such as Royal Assassin, Millstone, or Disrupting Scepter).

Mana economy is the amount of damage a card can deal per point of mana. Will-O'-The-Wisp and Holy Armor deal no damage; Holy Strength, Psychic Purge, and Benalish Hero each deal 1 damage; Unholy Strength and Savannah Lions each deal 2 damage; Unstable Mutation and Lightning Bolt deal 3 damage; and Goblin Grenade deals 5 damage. All of these spells cost one mana to cast—clearly, in terms of mana, some are more economical sources of damage than others.

Target selection refers to how selective a card allows you to be in determining what targets to affect. For example, Hurkyl's Recall is more selective than Shatterstorm: one affects the artifacts of a target player, while the other simply buries all artifacts in play. If you have the ability to destroy most or all of your opponent's cards of a certain type (without affecting your own cards) then you have a strong advantage. For example, Festival followed by Siren's Call will destroy only your opponent's creatures, giving it an advantage over Wrath of God.

Flexibility is how adaptable a card is to any given situation. Twiddle is a very flexible card, because you can almost always use it to do something, no matter what deck your opponent is playing. Compare Twiddle to Riptide or Magnetic Mountain, which only work against blue creatures. Because most decks don't contain blue creatures, these two cards are very inflexible. (Cards like Sleight of Mind, Chaoslace, or Deathlace, however, can add to the flexibility of a deck.) In general, flexible cards work well when you don't know what your opponent will be playing and inflexible cards work well when you do know what he will be playing. Typically, flexible cards go in the deck and inflexible ones go in the sideboard.

Using multiple copies of a card

Once you've determined which cards will go in the deck, you need to decide how many of each card to include. Most people pick four of each card—the limit under current DC tournament rules; by including four of a particular card, most players feel sure that they will get at least one of them in the course of a game. However, this causes problems when getting a duplicate of the card doesn't help.

What if there weren't a limit of four of each card? Obviously, a deck of sixty copies of any one card would lose horribly, so at some point you lose more than you gain by putting in an additional copy of a card. So, how many is the "right" number of each card?

If getting a duplicate of a given card isn't helpful, minimize that card in the deck. For example, once you've got a Titania's Song in play, an additional one will not help very much. You should only have one or two copies of this type of card in your deck, unless the card is critical to multiple combinations.

If getting a duplicate of a given card will make both the original and any duplicates stronger (as with Psychic Venom or Plague Rats), maximize that card in the deck. If you play with these cards, it generally makes sense to put in the maximum number allowable.

If a card doesn't fit into either of these two categories, try putting in one to three copies of the card. If you use a lot of duplicate cards, having a way to get rid of duplicates in exchange for different cards is useful (for instance, by using things like Jalum Tome or Bazaar of Baghdad).

Speed vs. power

Another tradeoff to consider is between speed and power. Speed cards tend to have low casting costs, allowing them to be cast quickly; power cards are slower, requiring a lot of mana, but can have devastating effects on the game. Deciding how much of your deck to dedicate to speed and how much to power can be difficult—generally, either straight speed or a balance between speed and power works well, but decks containing only power cards often cannot react effectively.

If you want speed, consider using a slightly higher percentage of mana than average so you will be guaranteed mana right away, allowing you to cast all your spells in the first few turns. If you want power, try to slow down your opponent with low-cost spells long enough for you to build up mana for more powerful spells.

The threshold dividing speed and power is about four mana. A deck with spells that all cost one, two, or occasionally three mana will be a very quick deck. Decks with cards which cost five or more mana tend to be more focused on power. As with speed decks, it's important to get mana from a power deck out as quickly as possible, so you'll be able to cast your larger spells.

Choosing your deck size

For most decks, the proper deck size is the minimum allowable under current tournament rules: sixty cards. This will maximize your chances of drawing the cards that you want. For example, if you draw twenty cards in an average tournament game and your deck has sixty cards in it, you have a one-in-three chance of drawing your only Maze of Ith. But if your deck has one hundred cards in it, you would have a one-in-five chance of getting the Maze of Ith.

A large deck can also dilute the effect of having multiple copies of a card. If there's a card that you absolutely need for your strategy to work and you include four copies of it, you will draw one in the first twenty cards roughly eighty percent of the time with a sixty-card deck. But for a one-hundred-card deck, you'll draw one in the first twenty cards only sixty percent of the time. With this significant decrease, limiting your deck size is critical.

The only exception to this is when you have a legitimate chance of drawing more than sixty cards. For example, in a multi-player free-for-all, you might want to have a larger deck to make sure you don't run out of cards. The other possibility is if you have your deck set up to draw ten or more cards in a single turn. In this case, you need a larger library to accommodate your strategy.

Limiting your deck to sixty cards doesn't have to decrease the variety in your deck. If all of your cards fit together well and you have mostly unique cards, you'll have a better deck than if you cram multiple copies of a few cards into an over-sized deck.

Relying on luck

Finally, don't overlook luck. If you include the opportunity to get a lucky draw in your deck, you will occasionally get one. For example, if I kill someone on the third turn by casting Channel and then Fireball, admittedly it was lucky. However, if you don't have the card in the deck, you can't draw it no matter how lucky you are. If you include a lot of different opportunities to get a lucky draw, chances are better that you will get at least one of them. Sometimes I'll cast Channel when I don't have a Fireball and then cast Winds of Change hoping to get one. Sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't, but if I wait to cast Channel until I draw the Fireball, my opponent might have drawn a Counterspell by then. If you know what the possibilities are (maybe you have four Fireballs in your deck and haven't drawn any of them yet), then take the calculated risk in order to win.

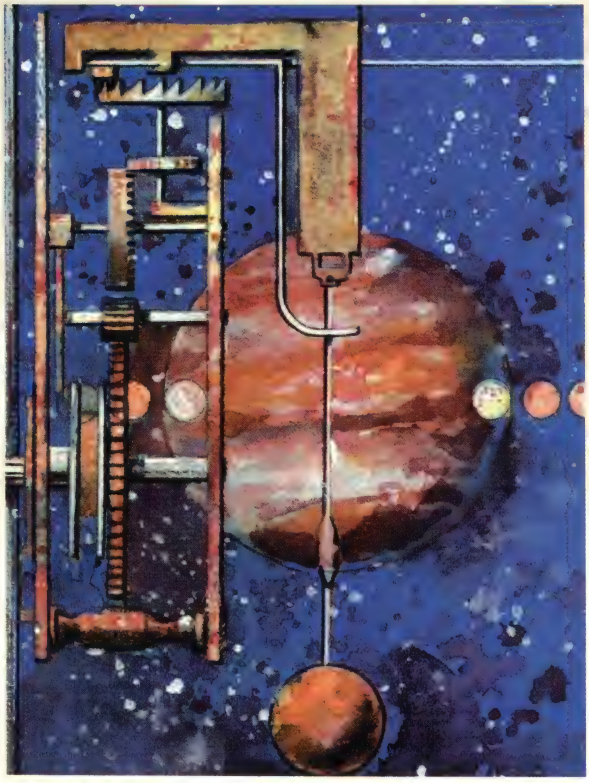
Lastly, try including "I win" cards in your deck or sideboard. These are cards that destroy a particular type of deck. For example, if you play with Blood Moon, you will eventually encounter a deck that loses every time to Blood Moon. If you don't include this type of card, you won't be lucky enough to draw it when you play a deck that is weak against it.

CLUSTER DECKS:

MAKING COMBINATIONS WORK

by
Beth Moursund

You played in a tournament last week, and got soundly thrashed by a player with a really cool card combination. So you went home and put the same two cards into your deck, then tested it on a few friends. But somehow, you never seemed to draw both of the cards at the same time—or, if you did, it was too late for them to do any good. Was your opponent at the tournament just lucky, or was it something else?



Every experienced **Magic**™ player knows that there are many two-card or three-card combinations which are devastating if you can get them into play. But if you have only one of each card in your deck, the chances of drawing all the parts of the combination before the duel ends are slim. Even if you use four of each card, the chances of drawing the ones you need are too low to depend on—especially if your opponent is playing a speed deck. This is why decks which rely upon a single combination do not generally fare well; they are spectacular when the right cards come up, but flop the rest of the time.

On the other hand, "kitchen sink" decks—those built by just picking a color or two and throwing in whichever cards of that color look interesting—will almost always lose to decks with more focus, and often to one of those two-card or three-card combinations which are difficult to get into play. How do those decks work? In many cases, the answer becomes clear when you watch the same deck over several games. In almost every game, the player gets out a good card combination...but the combination may be different every time. This kind of deck is what I call a "cluster" deck.

The goal of a cluster deck is to end up with cards which complement each other and form useful combinations *every* time the deck is played, not just after a lucky shuffle. Combinations of permanents (creatures, enchantments, artifacts, and lands) are generally best, since once you get them into play you can continue to use them over and over again. That's not to say that you shouldn't include single-use spells in any of your combinations; they can be fun, and some of them are very deadly. But you'll find that they tend to work better as a sideline or extra surprise, rather than as the focus around which to build an entire deck.

A cluster deck should never contain cards which work at cross-purposes. It's easy to see that putting either Gloom (white spells and white enchantments cost an additional three mana to use) or Karma (during each player's upkeep, deals 1 damage for each swamp that player controls) in your black-and-white deck is likely to hurt you as much or more than your opponent, and putting Tranquility (destroy all enchantments) in a deck that makes heavy use of enchantments probably is not a good idea. But some conflicts are less obvious. For example, consider a typical "weenie deck," a deck designed to put a lot of small creatures into play. If your creatures are black or white, adding Bad Moon (all black creatures get +1/+1) or Crusade (all white creatures get +1/+1) to such a deck works well, since these cards make small creatures more formidable. Alternatively, a Meekstone (no creatures with power greater than 2 untap during their controllers' untap phase) is a good addition to such a deck, since it won't affect your own creatures but will affect any large creatures your opponent puts out. But if you play with both of these in the same deck, you're apt to find yourself with a bunch of untappable creatures, as the Bad Moons or Crusades raise the power of your creatures, making them susceptible to Meekstone.

One way to build a cluster deck is to begin with a pair or trio of cards which form a great combination, and put in as many of them as you have, or as many as your deck-building rules allow. (Many players follow the Duelists' Convocation's tournament deck rules, which limit a deck to no more than four of each card except basic lands). Then, for each card in the combination, look for other cards which form a different powerful combination with that card. Compare each card that you consider adding with each of the others you have already chosen and think about whether it will help or hurt if you happen to draw them together. The first few selections will guide and shape the rest, since each new card must be compared with all of the earlier additions. Limit your deck to two colors, or three at the most, so that you'll have a good chance of drawing the right lands to cast the spells you choose.

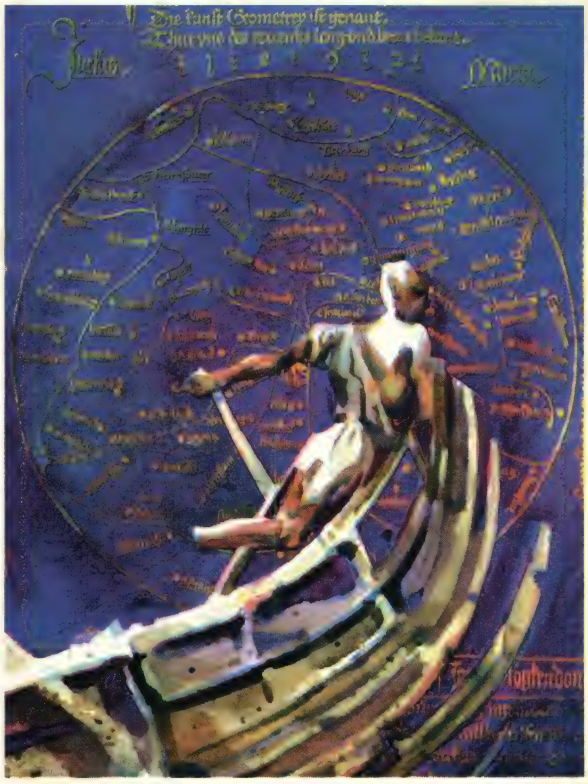
After you have selected a number of other cards which work well with your core combination, flesh out the deck with other cards that complement the general theme and fill in your deck's gaps. If you have some favorite, useful-in-any-deck cards that fit the color scheme, or cards that increase your chances of drawing a key card or that let you retrieve key cards from the graveyard, you may want to add those, too. And of course you need mana. Start by putting in one mana-producing land for each two spells; you'll adjust this ratio later.

Backgrounds and spot illustrations by Drew Tucker

Aim for a deck that's fairly close to the minimum deck size, since this will increase the odds of drawing the key cards. (The minimum deck size allowed by the **Magic** rules is forty cards, but most tournaments have a sixty-card minimum.)

A Classic Cluster Deck: Thicket Basilisk and Lure

Confused? Let's try an example. First we pick a pair of cards. We'll start with Lure, a green creature enchantment which forces all creatures that can to block the creature enchanted by Lure, and Thicket Basilisk, a green 2/4 creature which causes all creatures that it blocks or which block it to be destroyed at the end of combat. This classic combination is often called a "creature sweeper" since it destroys all of your opponent's non-wall creatures which are able to block. When playing this deck, the basic strategy is to use a creature enchanted with Lure, ideally the Basilisk, to draw away all of the opponent's blockers (preferably destroying those creatures with the Basilisk's "gaze of destruction") and to then deal damage to your opponent with your other, unblocked attacking creatures.



We'll start our deck with several of each of these two cards. Our next step is to examine each card to determine which other cards will work well with it in the overall strategy of the deck. First, Lure. If we don't get a Basilisk in our draw, what other cards would combine well with Lure? The first thing that might come to mind is Cockatrice, another green 2/4 creature which also causes creatures that it blocks or which block it to be destroyed. But since a Cockatrice flies, casting a Lure on it isn't nearly as effective—since only creatures with flying can block a Cockatrice, this combination only forces flying creatures to block. So we'll save the Cockatrice for a different deck, and look for other things that could use Lure effectively.

Thumbing through our cards some more, we notice that the enchantment Venom also causes creatures blocking or blocked by the creature it enchants to be destroyed. That sounds like a good fit! And it's green, matching the color of our cards so far. Having added some Venoms to the pile, we now need some creatures on which to cast Lure and Venom. Creatures which can regenerate would be good, since an attacker enchanted with Lure will usually take a lot of damage. Searching our collection for creatures with built-in regeneration, we find Clay Statue, Drudge Skeletons, Ghost Ship, Uthden Troll, and Will-O-The-Wisp. (We also find a couple of walls…but putting Lure on a Wall is nearly worthless.) We also spot Uncle Istvan, a creature which reduces the damage done to it by creatures to 0—an ability that is almost as useful as regeneration for coping with combat damage. Uncle Istvan and two of the other creatures with regeneration are black, so we decide to go with a two-color deck using green and black. There's nothing particularly special about this choice; picking some other creatures at this step—Ghost Ship or Uthden Troll, for example—would produce an entirely different deck. There are enough **Magic: The Gathering**™ cards in print that no player could consider every single possible combination. So just pick something that you like and build from there. If you decide later that you've painted yourself into a corner, you can always go back and change your mind.

And how about adding a Sengir Vampire, a black 4/4 creature with flying which gets a +1/+1 counter every time a creature is put in the graveyard the same turn the Vampire damaged it? A Vampire with Lure gets very nasty if your opponent can't kill it right away. Then there's Rabid Wombat, a 0/1 creature which gains +2/+2 for each creature enchantment on it; a Wombat with Lure and Venom would be 4/5. The Wombat also has the added benefit that it doesn't tap when it attacks, making the Venom on it doubly useful. Since Sengir Vampire flies, it has the same problem as a Cockatrice—the Lure will only attract other flying creatures. But with the Vampire and the Wombat, we're just as happy if they're not blocked, so we might want to use them anyway.

We also need some creatures to do damage while the Lured creature is drawing away the blockers. Green is a good color for that, since its creatures tend to be cheaper to cast than creatures in other colors. Looking through our green creatures, we can't resist the 6/4 Craw Wurms. It won't take very many turns with one of those getting through unblocked to finish off an opponent! They require two green mana and four colorless mana, though, making them expensive and difficult to cast; better add some smaller creatures like the 2/2 Grizzly Bears, in case of mana shortage, and maybe some mid-sized creatures as well. Alternatively, Pit Scorpions and Marsh Vipers, which both give poison counters to an

FIGURING OUT WHICH CARDS MAKE GOOD COMBINATIONS IS HALF THE CHALLENGE OF BUILDING A GOOD CLUSTER DECK, BUT HERE ARE SOME OF THE CLASSICS.

Animate Dead or Soul Exchange plus high-casting-cost creatures. *The classic "Reanimator" strategy: discard the big creatures, then bring them directly into play. Add cards that let you discard more often, or that move cards from your library to your graveyard.*

Channel plus Fireball or Disintegrate. *The original instant kill that works any time you have more life than your opponent. But watch out for Blue Elemental Blast and other counterspells, and for Reverse Damage! Since this is a one-shot combination, you've probably lost the game if you blow it.*

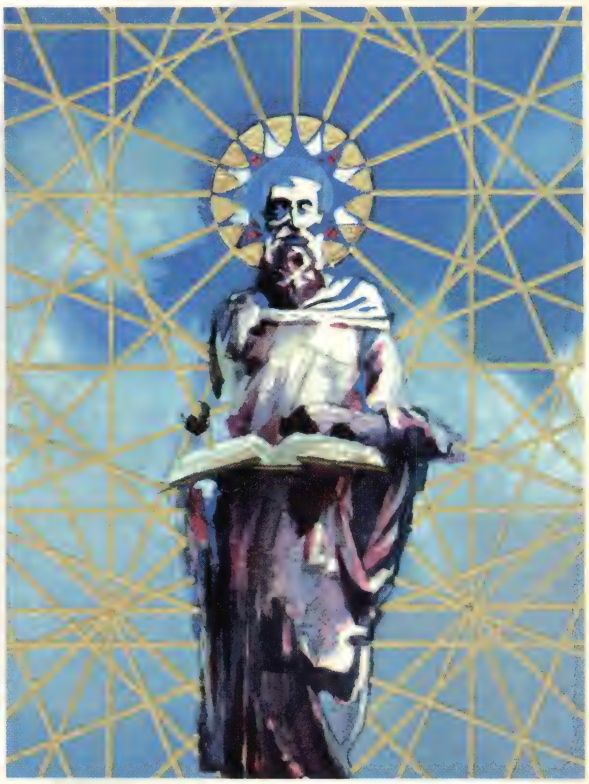
Instill Energy or Jandor's Saddlebags plus Colossus of Sardia. *Who cares about untap costs when you have a way to untap it every turn for free? You might even mix this idea with the Reanimator deck.*

Dwarven Warriors or Tawnos's Wand plus poisonous creatures. *Use the Wand or Warriors to make the poisonous creatures unblockable, and watch your opponent pile up poison counters. Or, instead of poison, use "inflatable" creatures: make them unblockable, and then pump up their power to do a lot of damage.*

Festival plus Siren's Call. *This is even more effective for killing off your opponent's creatures than the creature sweeper, since Festival prevents anything from attacking, and then Siren's Call kills everything except the creatures which came into play this turn and the walls. It's a one-shot combination, however, while the creature sweeper can be used every turn if you can keep the Basilisk alive.*

opponent damaged by them, don't do much damage, but if we can sneak them past the Lure-distracted defenders, the poison counters will end the game almost as quickly as a Craw Wurm.

We now have quite a few cards that combine well with Lure. Now for the other part of our core combination: if we don't draw a Lure, what else would combine well with a Basilisk? Anything that can stop creatures from dealing combat damage without preventing other effects will let the Basilisk destroy whatever it is facing and emerge unscathed. (Then, if we did manage to get Lure, so much the better!) Fog stops all creatures from dealing damage during combat; this is great for the Basilisk, but it doesn't work for this deck concept, since we want our other creatures to be dealing damage. Rescuing the Basilisk using Elvish Scout, which can be tapped to untap an attacking creature you control, works much better—like Fog, the Scout prevents a creature from dealing damage during combat, but it only affects one of your creatures. Maze of Ith, a land that can be used to untap an attacking creature, is similarly helpful when we use its effect on our Basilisk, and it's also good for defense, since we can use it to affect our opponent's creatures. We'll put in both of those, and leave Fog for another deck. Along the same lines, enchanting the Basilisk with Regeneration will let it survive to do its trick again and again; it's definitely worth adding a few copies of Regeneration to keep alive useful creatures which lack an inherent ability to regenerate, such as the Sengir Vampire.



Now that we have several cards that work well with Lure or Thicket Basilisk or both, we can flesh out the deck with other cards that seem to fit well. There are plenty of choices, with no one "best answer"; even decks built around this same combination can end up quite varied. Rather than finishing this specific deck, we'll just brainstorm a few ideas...after all, it's no fun if everyone builds the same deck!

We've got quite a few enchantments in the deck, so a Verduran Enchantress (controller draws a card when that player successfully casts an enchantment) would help us draw cards faster, and a Skull of Orm (bring one enchantment card from your graveyard to your hand) could help us recycle enchantments. Speaking of the graveyard, we could discard a high-cost creature and then bring it into play early in the game by using Animate Dead, which also helps us retrieve a dead Basilisk later in the game. To help us cast high-cost creatures early, we should consider Llanowar Elves and Dark Ritual, two good sources of fast mana. Terror lets us take out walls and annoying creatures that make themselves unable to block the Basilisk, as does Drain Life; the latter can be a devastating blow to our opponent late in the game. Giant Growth and Howl from Beyond make small creatures that get through after Lure draws away all the blockers very deadly. Perhaps we'll add a Desert Twister to get rid of Circles of Protection without destroying our own enchantments. (Tranquility would take them out much more easily, but since we're using a lot of enchantments, it doesn't fit this deck well.) Kormus Bell, Living Lands, and Living Plane let us attack with our own lands and watch our opponent's lands be destroyed as they block our Lure-enchanted Basilisk. The Wretched lets us take control of our opponent's blockers instead of destroying them. These are only a few possibilities; you probably have some others in mind already.

Now count the cards you've chosen so far. You should have selected at least forty creatures and other spells. If you have more than fifty, go back and weed out the less essential ones. This may be difficult, but remember that the smaller your deck is, the better chance you'll have of drawing the card you need at any given time. Also, try to keep the number of black and green spells roughly even. It's fine to have a bit more of one color, but avoid having twice as much of one color, as you're more vulnerable to the color-specific spells, and you may have problems getting enough of the right color of mana. Finally, add the land: one swamp for every two black spells and one forest for every two green spells. You may need to increase the mana-to-spell ratio because many of the cards in this deck have high casting costs, or require two mana of a particular color to cast. If you have Bayous available (a land which produces either one green or one black mana), you can substitute them for some of the basic land.

With that, you have a first draft of your Lure-Basilisk deck; it will be a bit awkward and need refining, but it's a good start. And you can use the same process to build a deck around any number of other card combinations. So go pick a combination or two of your own, pull out your cards, and start building a cluster deck that makes card combinations really work.

Stasis plus Time Elemental. *At the end of each of your opponent's turns, use the Time Elemental to pull the Stasis back into your hand; then, during your turn, cast it again. This keeps your opponent from ever getting an untap phase. There are a number of different cards that can be combined with Time Elemental to work similar tricks. It also works well with Ball Lightning, since you can summon the Ball Lightning, attack, and then after the attack use the Time Elemental to pull it back into your hand.*

Pestilence plus Circle of Protection: Black. *Pump lots of black mana into the Pestilence, and power the Circle to prevent taking any damage yourself. This is especially effective if all of your own creatures have either Regeneration or Protection from Black.*

Winter Orb plus Relic Barrier or Icy Manipulator. *At the end of each of your opponent's turns, use the Barrier or Manipulator to tap your Winter Orb. This allows you to untap all of your land every turn, while your opponent only gets to untap one land per turn. If the rest of your deck is any good at all, the mana advantage given by this combination can quickly grind your opponent into the ground.*

Power Surge plus Candelabra of Tawnos. *Use the Candelabra to untap your opponent's lands at the end of your turn; if your opponent doesn't have any fast effects to spend mana on, the Power Surge will deal plenty of damage.*

Time Vault plus Animate Artifact plus Instill Energy. *Probably the oldest "invincible" combination around: take an infinite number of turns. Of course, Time Vault is long out-of-print, and most players ban it anyway... but this one is just too classic not to mention.*

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The Anatomy of a Sealed Deck

by Joel Mick

Many players avoid playing in sealed-deck tournaments and leagues because they believe that success in a sealed-deck environment is too dependent upon luck. Having played in several sealed-deck leagues and tournaments, I've found that the difference in skill between an expert and an average sealed-deck player is enough to overcome most of the variations among sealed decks.

So how do you use the resources available in a sealed-deck environment to make the best possible deck? This article takes a hands-on approach to the problem: listed below are the contents of one **Magic: The Gathering**–Fourth Edition™ *starter deck and two* Fourth Edition *booster packs. Before reading the remainder of this article, try to construct the best legal deck (forty or more cards) using these cards plus any four basic lands of your choice. Then compare your deck with the deck that I constructed using these same cards.*

The Contents of Your Starter Deck and Two Boosters

WHITE: Blessing, Circle of Protection: Artifacts, Circle of Protection: Black, Death Ward, Green Ward, Holy Strength, Kismet, Northern Paladin

BLUE: Apprentice Wizard (2), Backfire, Creature Bond (2), Gaseous Form, Power Leak (2), Psychic Venom, Sea Serpent, Sleight of Mind, Twiddle, Unsummon, Zephyr Falcon

BLACK: Bog Imp, Bog Wraith, Cyclopean Mummy, Dark Ritual, Erg Raiders, Fear, Howl from Beyond, Hypnotic Specter, Pestilence, Plague Rats, Spirit Shackle, Vampire Bats, Word of Binding

RED: Eternal Warrior (2), Fire Elemental, Fireball (2), Gray Ogre, Immolation, Mons's Goblin Raiders, Wall of Fire

GREEN: Craw Wurm, Fog, Giant Growth, Grizzly Bears (2), Hurricane, Lifeforce, Marsh Viper, Pradesh Gypsies, Stream of Life (2), Tranquility, Tsunami, Wall of Wood, War Mammoth

ARTIFACTS: Battering Ram (2), Blue Mana Battery, Clay Statue, Dragon Engine, Fellwar Stone, Grapeshot Catapult, Shapeshifter, Tawnos's Wand

LAND: Plains (4), Island (6), Swamp (3), Mountain (5), Forest (4)

Remember that you may also include up to four basic lands of your choice in your deck.

Stop reading and take forty-five minutes to construct your deck. When you are done, try playing a few games with the deck you constructed to see how well it works, or write down its contents so that you can experiment with it later. Then take a look at the considerations involved in my choices of which cards to play.

Choosing Your Colors

Because it can be difficult to play spells in a deck that uses too many colors, most players in less restricted environments construct decks using only two colors. In a sealed-deck environment, however, you are almost always better off playing three colors than two, and it is not unusual to find players adding a few cards of a fourth color to their decks. There are two principal reasons for this. First, you want to play with as many of your most powerful spells as possible—if you limit yourself to spells of two colors, you usually will have to eliminate many powerful cards. Second, you generally will not have enough of the appropriate land to play with only two colors; thus, since you have to play with a third land type, you should add some of your better spells of that color to your deck.

To decide which colors to play, you should determine which colors have the most powerful spells. For the deck above, I feel that the most powerful spells are definitely in red, green, and black. Red has two Fireballs, Fire Elemental, and Immolation; green has Craw Wurm, Giant Growth, Hurricane, War Mammoth, and several good small creatures; and black has Bog Wraith, Howl from Beyond, Hypnotic Specter, Pestilence, and several good small creatures.

Before making a final decision to play certain colors, you should check whether you have enough of the appropriate land to support those colors. In general, you want to play with about forty percent land, and with at least five lands to support each of your major colors. In a forty-card deck, you will want a minimum of sixteen lands. For this deck, there are three swamps, five mountains, and four forests available, for a total of twelve lands. Adding four lands will bring the deck up to sixteen lands; if two swamps and a forest are among the lands added, the deck will have at least five lands for each major color.

Deciding How Many Cards to Play

The next major consideration is how many cards you should play in your deck. You must play with a minimum of forty cards, but you may play with as many more than that as you like. You will almost always want to play with between forty and forty-five cards.

There are several reasons for this. First, because you want to play with about forty

Backgrounds by Jeff Menges

percent land, playing with significantly more than forty cards will often force you to play with lands that don't produce mana of one of your major colors. In this deck, if you play with more than sixteen lands you will have to play with either plains or islands. Also, playing with as close to forty cards as possible makes it more likely that you will draw the cards you need. Finally, when you draw either too much land, too little land, or land of the wrong type, smaller decks are faster at "self-correcting" the problem than larger decks, because your chances of drawing a particular card you need are greater.

On the other hand, there are reasons to play with slightly more than forty cards. In sealed-deck games, it is not that uncommon for a player to lose by running out of cards; should the game turn into a stalemate, playing with more than forty cards makes it more likely that you will win by having more cards than your opponent. The more defensively oriented your deck is, the more important this consideration becomes. In addition, playing with more than forty cards gives you room to add a few "surprise" cards, such as Fog, and also makes it more difficult for your opponent to predict which cards you have in your hand.

Filling Out Your Deck

Once I decided to play red, green, and black, I listed the cards in each of these colors, along with artifacts, that I might want to use. Because I want to play close to forty cards with at least sixteen lands, I only need about twenty-four non-land cards. Listing the thirty-five or so best non-land cards will make sure you consider every card that you might want to use. When listing these cards, you should always consider cards that allow you to do difficult-to-stop damage, such as direct damage spells, flying or unblockable creatures, or cards that make your creatures more difficult to block, since these are the key to most sealed-deck strategies.

In red, the best cards are the two Fireballs, Fire Elemental, and Immolation. All of these are excellent cards that should almost certainly be included in the deck. In green, the best cards are Craw Wurm, Giant Growth, the two Grizzly Bears, Hurricane, Pradesh Gypsies, the two Stream of Lifes, Tranquility, and War Mammoth. Also worth considering are Lifeforce and Tsunami; these cards could really hurt if your opponent is playing black or blue, respectively. In black, the best cards are Bog Imp, Bog Wraith, Cyclopean Mummy, Dark Ritual, Erg Raiders, Howl from Beyond, Hypnotic Specter, Pestilence, Vampire Bats, and Word of Binding. Finally, all nine artifacts are reasonably powerful. This yields a total of thirty-five non-land cards to choose from. Before narrowing these down, let's think a little bit about how to win with this deck.

Basic Strategies of Sealed-Deck Construction

There are several basic ways you might plan to win with a tuned sealed deck. With a "speed" strategy, you attempt to do between 8 and 15 points of damage to your opponent quickly with small creatures and other cards that do damage early in the game, and then finish off your opponent with something that does difficult-to-stop damage later in the game. With this strategy, you may want to play with slightly less than forty percent land and more creatures than normal because you will be unlikely to win unless you can do some damage early, and you usually won't have many cards that require a lot of mana.

Then there is the "big creature/direct damage" strategy. With this strategy, you plan to defeat your opponent by playing either an overwhelming number of large creatures, a large flying creature, multiple direct-damage spells, or a combination of these. This second strategy is very mana intensive—until you get five or six lands in play, you will rarely be able to cast your better creatures or use your direct damage effectively. The big risk with this type of deck is that it will face a speed deck, stall at three or four lands, and you will get overrun by small and medium-sized creatures. Accordingly, when employing this strategy you usually will play with more than forty percent land. Also, to reduce the risk of being overrun with creatures early, the smaller creatures in this type of deck should be defensively oriented creatures such as Giant Tortoise, Yotian Soldier, or even walls, rather than more offensively oriented creatures like Battering Ram or Erg Raiders.

Finally, your deck may employ a "stalling" strategy, in which you attempt to stabilize the game so that your opponent cannot favorably attack, then win by doing one or more points of difficult-to-stop damage per turn with an unblockable creature, or with cards such as Cursed Land or Prodigal Sorcerer. In extreme cases, you might even win by running your opponent out of cards. This deck needs as many defensively oriented cards as possible, with a few ways to do repeatable, difficult-to-stop damage.

In general, the cards you have available will dictate which strategy you should employ. With the proper cards, however, the "big creature/direct damage" strategy is probably the strongest in sealed-deck environments.

Given the cards available for this deck, some form of "big creature/direct damage" strategy seems best. The available cards are about average in terms of big creatures, with Craw Wurm, Fire Elemental, Shapeshifter, Bog Wraith, and War Mammoths. Unfortunately, by the time I can cast one of these creatures, my opponent will often have ways of dealing with it; thus, with the exception of Bog Wraith against an opponent with swamps, none of these cards is likely to win the game for me. However, the deck contains a tremendous number of direct-damage spells, with two Fireballs and Hurricane, as well as Howl from Beyond and Pestilence. I also have two Stream of Lifes to keep me alive. Accordingly, I focused on building a deck that would keep me alive long enough to defeat my opponent with direct damage.

Fine-Tuning Your Deck

Having chosen a strategy, I went though the list of possible cards and decided which to keep. Of the cards that do direct damage, I definitely wanted to play with the two Fireballs, Hurricane, and Howl from Beyond. Usually I would also want Pestilence, because it is such a powerful card; in this case, however, Pestilence is less important because there are four other direct-damage spells. Also, since Pestilence requires two black mana to cast and is powered by black mana, the deck needs at least six swamps—however, this would mean playing with only five forests, which is dangerous given the importance of our green creatures to an early defense. So, although Pestilence is normally an excellent card, it is actually marginal in this particular deck and I chose not to play with it.

Next, let's consider creatures. Depending on your strategy and the available cards, you should play between twelve and eighteen creatures in a forty-card deck. Recall that my strategy was to defeat the opponent later in the game, using direct damage rather than big creatures. Accordingly, the deck should focus on neutral to defensively oriented creatures, and on small to medium-sized creatures. With this in mind, I chose to play with two Grizzly Bears, Pradesh Gypsies, War Mammoths, Bog Imp, Bog Wraith, Hypnotic Specter, Vampire Bats, Clay Statue, Dragon Engine, and Grapeshot Catapult.

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There are also three large creatures to choose from: Fire Elemental, Craw Wurm, and Shapeshifter. Normally I would include all of these creatures in my deck, but since I expected to win with direct damage, I chose to play with only two of these creatures. I gave the nod to Shapeshifter, which is easier to cast because it has no colored mana requirement, and Craw Wurm, because I planned to play with more forests than mountains, making the Craw Wurm easier to cast than the Fire Elemental.

I also chose to play all three of the available spells that provide mana: Fellwar Stone, Dark Ritual, and Blue Mana Battery. Sixteen lands in a forty-card deck is a little too low for a deck that relies on large creatures or direct damage. Adding Fellwar Stone is clearly correct, since it functions much like a land and generally produces at least two colors of mana that you need to cast your spells. Dark Ritual is marginal, since it only lets you do two extra points of damage with a direct-damage spell; however, it helps cast Hypnotic Specter, and may also thwart an opponent's Power Sink, so I chose to play with it. Lastly, even an off-color mana battery is a very strong card in a deck that relies on direct damage, so I added a Blue Mana Battery even though I'm not playing blue.

To complete the deck, I chose Immolation, Giant Growth, Stream of Life, and Tranquility. Immolation and Giant Growth are both great cards that belong in almost any deck. Stream of Life is a reasonably good card in a deck that relies on either the "big creature/direct damage" or the "stalling" strategy, particularly because of its surprise value. Finally, I chose Tranquility—there are definitely enough good common and uncommon enchantments that my opponent might be playing to warrant adding it to my deck. Tranquility is made better by the fact that I am playing with no long-term enchantments: I'll generally use Immolation to immediately kill one of my opponent's pesky little creatures, rather than using it to increase the power of my bigger creatures.



My Final Deck

RED: Fireball (2), Immolation

GREEN: Craw Wurm, Giant Growth, Grizzly Bears (2), Hurricane, Pradesh Gypsies, Stream of Life, Tranquility, War Mammoths

BLACK: Bog Imp, Bog Wraith, Dark Ritual, Howl from Beyond, Hypnotic Specter, Vampire Bats

ARTIFACTS: Blue Mana Battery, Clay Statue, Dragon Engine, Fellwar Stone, Grapeshot Catapult, Shapeshifter

LAND: Mountain (5), Forest (6), Swamp (5)

There you have it: the final deck. I chose to leave Lifeforce and Tsunami out of the deck. Lifeforce is rather difficult to use, since it requires keeping two forests untapped if you want to be able to counter your opponent's black spells; I would add Lifeforce only if my opponent had Sengir Vampire plus several other good black cards. Tsunami is much easier to use, and I would play it against any opponent playing with four or more islands. Because I am playing with nine green cards and only six black cards, I chose to take an additional two forests and two swamps. I am rather unhappy to have to play with five mountains for only three red spells, but otherwise I am quite happy with the way this deck shaped up.

More than One Way to Tune a Deck

Now take a look at the deck that you constructed with these cards. If your choices were somewhat different than mine, don't worry; even in sealed-deck construction, there is definitely room for variation. In fact, to assess how much variation there would be between decks built by different players, I asked **Magic**'s™ creator, Richard Garfield, to create a deck out of these very same cards. The deck turned out to be similar to mine, but with a few interesting differences.

Richard built a deck with the same three colors, but went more heavily into black, taking a sixth swamp instead of a sixth forest so he could play with Pestilence, Word of Binding, and Erg Raiders. Richard felt that his deck actually had two strategies: with decent creatures, it could get an early creature advantage or break through with creatures later in the game, or it could win with direct damage. Therefore he chose to play with Shapeshifter, Fire Elemental, and Craw Wurm, though he was tempted to strip out the Craw Wurm. (I was less optimistic about the ability of a large ground creature to break through later.)

Richard added two plains to his deck for extra mana, giving him eighteen land out of forty-three cards, or forty-two percent land. Richard's "sideboard" consisted of Tsunami, Circle of Protection: Black (for use against opponents playing black), and Tranquility (his most borderline rejection). He chose not to play with Stream of Life, noting that his deck already had too many mana-intensive spells (two of which, Pestilence and Word of Binding, I had left out.) He also thought Blue Mana Battery was almost worth playing with, but not quite.

How does the deck you constructed compare to mine or Richard's? If you haven't done so already, play a few games with the deck that you originally constructed. Then try playing with the decks that Richard and I built and compare your results. While there is probably no "right" way to tune this deck, there are definitely better and worse options; if you find your deck isn't as successful as those we built, try tuning it again, using the process I've outlined. Then get some friends together and put it to the test against other sealed decks—and see if you made the best choices!



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DEFROSTING THE Icy Manipulator

by Shawn F. Carnes and Michael G. Ryan



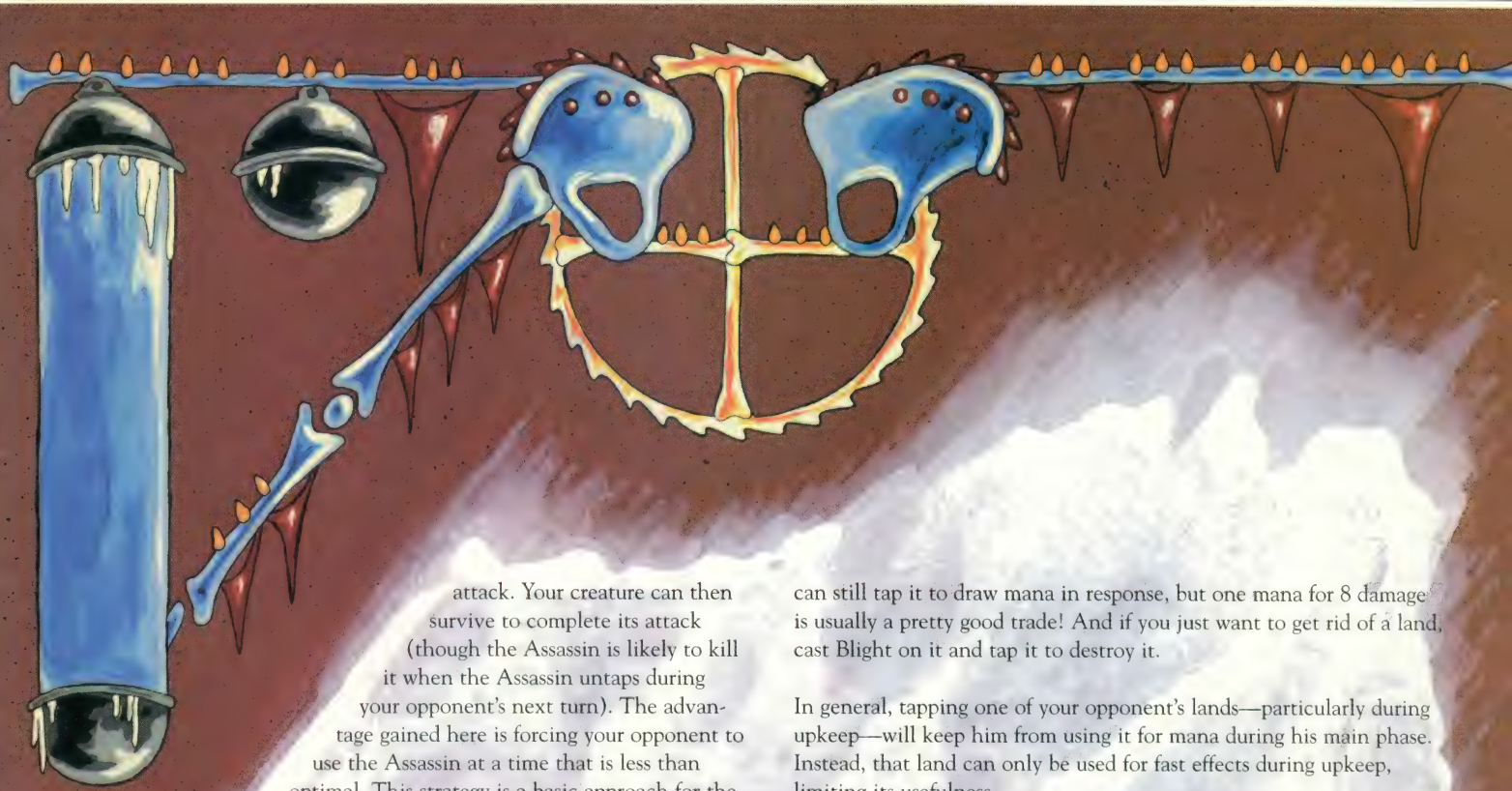
Everything cold is new again: the Icy Manipulator, perhaps one of the most confusing cards in **Magic: The Gathering**™, has been thawed out for inclusion in *Ice Age*™. Players who have long wondered about the intricacies of manipulating the Icy now have a chance to test its versatility against both *Ice Age* cards and previously released **Magic** cards. But just how useful is it?

On the surface, the ability of the Icy Manipulator seems innocent enough: tap any artifact, creature, or land. No effects are generated by the tapping, so tapping your opponent's Zuran Spellcaster won't cause it to deal 1 damage to a target creature or player. The Icy Manipulator is only confusing when you fail to understand how the *timing* of its effect works.

According to the rules of timing, competing fast effects or instants resolve "last in, first out." This means that the last effect played is the first one resolved, and when a situation follows this sort of timing, the Icy Manipulator appears to become more complicated. No matter how the Icy is used, competing effects never seem to occur the way some players think they should. Consider this example using Royal Assassin (a *Fourth Edition* creature you can tap to destroy a tapped creature): if you declare an attack and tap your attacking creature, your opponent can then tap his or her Royal Assassin to destroy your attacker. But can't you use Icy Manipulator to tap the Royal Assassin, preventing it from killing your creature? The logic would go something like this: fast effects are resolved last in, first out, so the Icy would tap the Assassin before it could kill the tapped creature. Intuitively, this seems true, but the problem arises not from confusion over "last in, first out" timing, but over the difference between costs and effects. Effects resolve last in, first out, but costs are paid when a player declares he or she is using an effect. Tapping the Royal Assassin to destroy a tapped creature is part of the activation cost of the Assassin's special ability. All costs are paid immediately, and then effects resolve last in, first out: the Assassin is tapped and the Icy is tapped (and one mana is paid); and then the Icy taps the Assassin (which is already tapped), and the Assassin's ability destroys your attacker.

Then what good is the Icy Manipulator in a situation like this? The answer is quite simple: if you use the Icy to tap the Assassin before the attack, then the Assassin is already tapped when you declare your

Backgrounds by Amy Weber



attack. Your creature can then survive to complete its attack (though the Assassin is likely to kill it when the Assassin untaps during your opponent's next turn). The advantage gained here is forcing your opponent to use the Assassin at a time that is less than optimal. This strategy is a basic approach for the Icy—tapping a permanent at a time when your opponent either cannot use it or cannot use it to its maximum effect.

But the Royal Assassin is just the tip of the iceberg; many permanents should quiver in fear of the dreaded Icy Manipulator.

Deep-Freezing Lands

At first, the Icy Manipulator seems to lose time and again versus land. Even if you tap someone's land, your opponent can still draw the mana from it in response. Even if tapping the land causes an effect other than producing mana, the Icy can't stop the land's controller from using the effect if it has a valid target. For example, suppose you tapped Pendelhaven, a *Legends* land that, when tapped, gives a target 1/1 creature +1/+2 until the end of the turn; the controller of Pendelhaven could just assign +1/+2 in response to the Icy's ability. So what use is the Icy against lands? Well, forcing an opponent's land to tap can still be quite beneficial, even in the example with Pendelhaven. When your opponent taps Pendelhaven in response to your Icy, she has to assign that +1/+2 to a creature and she must do so immediately, not during combat (when that +1/+2 might make a big difference depending on how blocking was declared). This is the same strategy used against Royal Assassin—forcing your opponent to use an effect at a time that is less than optimal. Some land enchantments are even more vulnerable to this strategy—Earthlore, for example, gives a blocking creature +1/+2 until the end of the turn. Tap it before you declare an attack, and there will be no legal target (as no creatures are blocking yet); your opponent will have to allow the land to be tapped without generating Earthlore's effect.

In conjunction with the right cards, the Icy can also be a lethal source of damage to your opponent. Put four Psychic Venoms on one land and tap it with your Icy to deal 8 damage to your opponent. Your opponent can still tap it to draw mana in response, but one mana for 8 damage is usually a pretty good trade! And if you just want to get rid of a land, cast Blight on it and tap it to destroy it.

In general, tapping one of your opponent's lands—particularly during upkeep—will keep him from using it for mana during his main phase. Instead, that land can only be used for fast effects during upkeep, limiting its usefulness.

Chilling Artifacts

The Icy Manipulator can be equally useful in affecting artifacts, both your own and your opponent's. The rules state that continuous artifacts are only "on" when they are untapped, so the Icy can shut down the effectiveness of continuous artifacts just like flipping off a switch. For instance, Meekstone keeps creatures with power greater than 2 from untapping, but if Meekstone becomes tapped, creatures can then untap as normal. By tapping Meekstone before the end of your opponent's turn, you negate the effect of the Meekstone on your creatures (because during untap you can choose to untap your creatures before untapping Meekstone). Unfortunately for your opponent, the Meekstone will remain untapped through her untap phase, so her creatures with power greater than 2 will remain tapped. This same trick works for a variety of other cards, including Winter Orb and *Ice Age*'s Vibrating Sphere and Staff of the Ages. For a tactic that requires a bit of forethought, play the *Ice Age* artifact Naked Singularity (which causes lands to produce different colored mana) and mix up your opponent's mana choices while using the Icy to keep your own mana straight.

Tapping artifacts that aren't continuous, but which still don't normally tap (like Shield of Ages), will produce a similar result—if an Icy taps your opponent's Shield of the Ages, it cannot be used to prevent damage until it untaps. The Icy works with equal results against cards like Jade Monolith, which allows your opponent to redirect damage to a creature, and Rakalite, which prevents damage to any target.

To make tapping artifacts even more painful for your opponent, cast Relic Bind on your opponent's artifact so that when you tap it, he'll be forced to take damage or give you life whether the artifact's special ability gets used or not. Try tapping a troublesome artifact during your opponent's upkeep and force him to either play the effect or allow the artifact to be tapped without effect. This works particularly well against artifacts that affect combat, such as Celestial Sword, Spirit Shield, and Ashnod's Battle Gear. By forcing your opponent to assign power and toughness bonuses before attackers and blockers have been declared, you won't receive any nasty surprises during combat.

Finally, there's always the possibility that your Icy will run up against your opponent's Icy. This most often requires a preemptive strike—tap your opponent's Icy with your own, forcing your opponent to either use the Icy's ability or allow it to be tapped without effect.

Numbing Creatures

Tapping your opponent's creatures can prove invaluable in shaping the outcome of an attack. By choosing the right times to tap them, your opponent's creatures can prove to be a hindrance to him or her; better still, they can prove to be dangerous.

Most creatures are designed for two purposes: attack and defense, and the Icy works quite well against them. Even a threatening heavy hitter like a Shivan Dragon or a Polar Kraken (an 11/11 *Ice Age* creature with trample) is easily thwarted if it's tapped before your opponent's attack phase. Furthermore, you can tap these creatures before attacking to clear them out of the path of your attackers. Or you can wait until one of your attackers is blocked, and then tap the blocker so it will die without damaging your attacker (because tapped blockers deal no damage in combat).

The trick to stopping a creature from attacking or blocking is to tap the creature before attack or defense is chosen. You can do this any time up until you or your opponent announces an attack—you just can't wait until after attackers or blockers have been declared. Once attackers are tapped, it's too late to tap one to keep it from attacking; likewise, once a blocker has been assigned to one of your attackers, the attacker will be blocked regardless of whether the blocker is tapped. Remember, too, that you can tap two potential blockers every other turn: one at the end of your opponent's turn and another on your turn after the Icy has untapped.

Enchantments that cause damage when a creature is tapped are an effective way to damage your opponent, much the same way that Psychic Venom deals damage when a land is tapped. Seizures, an *Ice Age* creature enchantment, states that whenever the target creature becomes tapped, that creature's controller has to either pay three mana or take 3 damage. The best your opponent can hope for is to be forced to pay three mana over and over again. Some cards already have this concept built in: Erg Raiders, for example, deals 2 damage to its controller if it doesn't attack. If you use your Icy to tap Erg Raiders before your opponent's attack every turn, he'll take 2 damage every turn and you won't.

You can also use enchantments to destroy your opponent's creatures. Put Aggression (which states that if the creature enchanted with Aggression doesn't attack by the end of its controller's turn, it is destroyed) on a creature, then tap it with the Icy on your opponent's turn. Unless your opponent can untap it again and attack with it, it will be destroyed. A slightly more effective use of this strategy is to tap one of your opponent's creatures and then play Siren's Call (which requires all non-wall creatures that can attack to do so or be destroyed).

Finally, keep a sharp eye out for creatures with untap costs. These are particularly vulnerable to the Icy's cold touch. Wait until your opponent has paid the cost to untap her Island Fish Jasconius, Leviathan, Colossus of Sardia, or Soldevi Golem, and then tap the creature again. She might pay the untap cost again, but sooner or later she'll probably learn not to untap that creature as long as your Icy is around.

In many instances, upkeep is when the Icy Manipulator can have its most bone-chilling effect. By forcing your opponent to use a creature's special ability during upkeep or not at all, you leave yourself some breathing room during the main phase.

Manipulating the Icy

When an artifact such as Icy Manipulator depends so much on the careful timing of its use, it's important to consider every activation carefully. Your opponent will often try to outmaneuver your timing, by tapping targets as fast effects or by using spells to undo the damage your Icy has done. Work this to your advantage; the Icy Manipulator can be played both offensively and defensively, and your opponent can only guess which target you'll freeze next. If you're able to remember the limitations of the Icy Manipulator, you will be able to easily maximize its cold strengths.



WIZARDS OF THE COAST
CARAVAN™ TOURS
OVERVIEW OF AMERICAN TOURS '95

WEST COAST, FROM PORTLAND TO LOS ANGELES
August and September, '95
Artists: Richard Kane Ferguson and Liz Danforth

- Magik OS Enterprises: August 25
  1919 Pacific Ave.
  Forest Grove, OR 97116
  (503) 359-5188
- Neverland Comics: August 26
  150 NE Garden Valley Blvd.
  Roseburg, OR 97470
  (503) 673-3992
- Fantasy Game World: August 27
  336 Broadway #12
  Chico, CA 95928
  (916) 345-3115
- Collector's Choice: August 28
  2980 Union Ave.
  San Jose, CA 95124
  (408) 559-1419
- Metro Comics: August 30
  15 West Anapamu
  Santa Barbara, CA 93101
  (805) 963-2168
- Third Planet: August 31
  3822 Sepulveda Blvd.
  Torrance, CA 90505
  (310) 791-6227
- All-Star Games: September 1
  2773 Diamond Bar Blvd.
  Diamond Bar, CA 91765
  (909) 598-4700
- The Golden Apple: September 2
  7711 Melrose Ave.
  (3 Blocks east of Fairfax)
  Los Angeles, CA 90046
  (213) 658-6047
- Comic+: September 3
  12353 F10 Mariposa Rd.
  Victorville, Ca 92392
  (619) 245-6753

SAN ANTONIO, TX
October, '95
Artists: Brian Snoddy and Ken Meyer Jr.

- Frontier Games: October 5
  5122 Fredericksburg Rd.
  San Antonio, TX 78229
  (210) 344-6905
  800-we play it
- Collectors Asylum: October 6
  12311 Nacogdoches Suite 111
  San Antonio, TX 78217
  (210) 590-6310
- Heroes & Fantasies: October 7
  914 Pat Booker Rd.
  Universal City, TX 78148
  (210) 945-4376
- Heroes & Fantasies: October 8
  (at Colonies House)
  3511 Colony Dr.
  San Antonio, TX 78230
  (210) 341-5567

FLORIDA
November, '95
Artists: Tom Wänerstrand and Chris Rush

- Comics & Collectables: November 1
  5215 W Broward Blvd.
  Ft. Lauderdale, Fl 33317
  (305) 791-8022
- Wizard's Wall: November 2
  3150 S Babcock St.
  Melbourne, FL 32901
  (407) 727-2599
- Cloak & Dagger: November 3
  138 W Granada Blvd.
  Ormond Beach, FL 32174
  (904) 677-6763
- Starbase K-7: November 4
  829 Sandlake Rd.
  Orlando, FL 32809
  (407) 240-7989
- Coliseum of Comics, November 5
  1180 East Vine St.
  Kissimme, FL 34744
  (407) 870-5322

Wizards OF THE COAST

Since their March premiere, Wizards of the Coast's American Tours have been in full swing, bringing the artists, game designers, and support staff behind Magic: The Gathering™ to stores all over the country. These Caravan™ tours have an entirely different focus than our convention appearances, since we visit the public where they shop, not at a convention. Best of all, these tours are free, so you don't have to pay an entrance fee.

Every month, we will be sending a team to a different area of the country. Come visit us and play Magic™ to win boosters, learn The Great Dalmuti™ or RoboRally™, win one of our many door prizes, or meet your favorite artists to get cards signed or buy prints.

During these tours, we'll be showing you previews of upcoming products, answering questions about our games and our company, and—of course—playing games. Plus, we'll be giving away a special Ice Age™ promotional poster by Richard Kane Ferguson, made especially for our tours: Kölbjorn, Elder Druid of the Juniper Order.

We have planned tours through the end of November, and we hope to have a special tour during the holiday season. Our tours will continue throughout North America in 1996. If you'd like us to visit your area, ask your local retailer to request a visit.

This schedule gives an overview of the American Tours schedule. We will be visiting Atlanta in early August, stopping at various locations on the West Coast in late August and early September, visiting San Antonio in early October, and touring Florida in early November.

JOIN THE CARAVAN!

Prepare for the coming of: "GUARDIANS"

If you've been waiting for a collectible card game with truly incredible art, wait no longer. FPG is proud to present "GUARDIANS," an exciting new collectible card game with all new art by the top fantasy artists in the world! Prepare yourselves for a visual roller coaster as you journey into the real past to meet all manner of creatures, from the jolly Gnomes, swashbuckling Pirates and foul Undead to the ferocious Dragons and terrible Slag Beasts.



If you've been waiting for a collectible card game with a truly innovative game system that combines strategy with rapid card play, wait no longer. FPG is proud to present "GUARDIANS," an exciting new collectible card game created and developed by Keith Parkinson and Luke Peterschmidt. In "GUARDIANS," players assume the role of Vierkun, powerful mystics living in Earth's true past, where Dragons and Clamjacks really existed.

As one of the Vierkun, players marshal all manner of forces in their strongholds, each under the protection of one of the various Guardians. These forces are then sent out to conquer the disputed lands. While vying for control of the disputed lands, opposing armies wage war on each other with a vast array of creatures, magic items and spells.

FPG wanted to release a game both set in an interesting world and utilizing a game system like nothing else out there, all the while realizing that the key to a successful game is how well it plays. In that regard, "GUARDIANS" was developed and intensely playtested for more than 16 months. More than 70 playtesters put "GUARDIANS" through over 5,000 hours of grueling examination, necessary to ensure a game with true play value. As a result, "GUARDIANS" brings to collectible card games an original gaming system that combines the thought and strategy of chess with fast-paced card action. While the basic rules can be quickly mastered, the infinite strategies will provide challenges for even the most experienced gaming enthusiasts.

"GUARDIANS" is fully painted by five incredible fantasy artists. Brom, Don Maitz, Keith Parkinson, Mike Ploog and James Warhola have combined to produce the unprecedented 270-plus all-new pieces of the most spectacular art ever to grace any collectible card game. The cards are produced with four levels of rarity: common, uncommon, rare and ultra-rare and are available in 60-card starter decks as well as 14-card booster packs. Randomly inserted with the booster packs will be a limited number of bonus packs, containing 14 of the rare and ultra-rare cards.

"GUARDIANS" will also have full after-market support. Point-of-purchase materials as well as prizes and rules for in-store tournaments, along with online support and official tournaments, will show the commitment that FPG has made to both the retailers and players.

So stand forewarned, gamers! Don't let your guard down. Be on the lookout for "GUARDIANS" - the new standard in visual excellence for collectible card games.

Limited Edition Premiering: AUGUST 1995

GUARDIANS™



GUARDIANS created by Keith Parkinson and Luke Peterschmidt.
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FPG™

"Have I Got A Game For You"

by Mark Rosewater

You enjoy playing **Magic**™. You enjoy hanging out with your friends. Hey, you think, what if I could do both? So you sit down some of your pals, teach them the game, and the conversation goes something like this:

You: "Your Orgg's dead."

Them: "But it was bigger."

You: "Yeah, well, I banded all four of my Pikemen with the Knights of Thorn."

Them: "But I have trample."

You: "Normally, that would work, but I have banding, so I can redistribute the damage. I put it on the Knights, and since it has protection from red, the damage is reduced to zero. Now, if I didn't have the Knights, I could band my four Pikemen with my Bears and put all the damage on one Pikemen. Your Orgg would still die, but you would do five points of trample damage."

Them: "I've got a headache. Let's stop."

You: "Wait, look, I won't block...."

One of the things that makes **Magic** such a fun game is the complexity of its play. Unfortunately, this quality can be a roadblock for anybody new who wants to learn the game. The question is, how can you teach your friends to play without overwhelming them and scaring them away? By taking it step by step, this article will walk you through some of the land mines in explaining **Magic** to a new player and will help you make the introduction as simple and painless as possible.



Step One: Find a Receptive Student

You first need to find a person who has some desire to learn the game. No matter how much you sugar-coat its introduction, this will still involve a lot of work on the part of the person learning. Thus, it is important that this person wants to be there in the first place and has some interest in playing. But what if you have some friends who you really think would like the game if they only tried it? Well, forcing something on someone almost never results in a positive experience. Let those friends come to you. And trust me, if they are the kind of people that **Magic** would truly interest, they'll eventually get curious enough to ask how the game works.

Step Two: Make a Date to Play

Once you have an interested party, set up a time to play. You want the experience to be one that is both focused and pleasant. You can achieve this by setting aside some time specifically aimed at learning the game. Finally, by creating a little build-up, you can get that new player excited to learn.

Step Three: Build a Beginner's Deck

Before you begin teaching, you have a little work of your own to do. The biggest mistake most players make when explaining **Magic** is using their current decks as their teaching example. This is the equivalent of trying to teach someone to read with college textbooks. If you are serious about introducing someone to the game, you need to build a deck specifically for that purpose. (Actually, you need to build two of them, since you, too, should be playing with a basic deck when it's time for a sample game.) These decks need to meet the following guidelines:

- Use only cards that are very easy to understand. The game itself will be a bit disorienting, so make sure that the cards are not. The commons from the basic set, designed to be nuts-and-bolts cards, fit this bill nicely.
- Strictly limit the number of creatures with special abilities, and remove anything with banding, trample, or protection from any color. This will keep you from overwhelming the beginner with too many exceptions to the basic rules.
- Provide a healthy mix of basic lands (at least forty percent). This is to ensure that the beginner will not be frustrated when he or she doesn't draw the right mana. And since this deck will be the model for the new player's future decks, it is a good idea to introduce him or her to the basic mana-to-spell ratio (about 24 to 36).
- Keep the decks at exactly sixty cards. One way to keep the game simple is to minimize the number of cards in the decks.
- Put the decks in starter boxes. Once again, this makes the game seem neat and tidy. Also, it allows the new player to take the deck home later (see Step Ten).
- Make two three-color decks such that all five colors are represented between them. Three colors per deck will help cut down on the frustration factor (nothing is fun about having mismatched lands and spells) while still offering a fair amount of spell variety. And by making sure that the five colors (and artifacts) will appear between the two decks during the duel, you allow the new player to experience all the different types of magic.

Step Four: Create the Proper Environment

As with any activity, there is only one first time. Since you want it to be a memorable experience, make sure that you have the proper environment in which to teach. This means that you should be in a place without distractions. Find a nice large table with comfortable chairs that will allow both of you to have all the space you need. While it might seem silly to dedicate so much time to the environment, remember that the new player will not always separate the game from the event of playing the game.

Backgrounds by Scott Kirschner

Step Five: Introduce the Game

Before you take out any cards, you should begin by explaining the premise of the game. Give the new player an opportunity to understand the context of the game. In other words, these aren't just cards but magical spells that summon distant creatures and bend the forces of nature to their whim. And the player isn't just a person playing a game, but a wizard dueling for his or her existence. If your new player is the type who enjoys roleplaying, get him or her involved in the spirit of planeswalking. The importance of this is that it helps to establish the metagame; it gives **Magic** a larger scope as players realize that the game goes beyond any one single duel. They aren't just playing a card game; they are entering a new and exciting world.

Step Six: The Preliminary Explanation

The first thing you're going to want to explain about the game is what all the cards represent. This is a perfect opportunity to get the cards into the new player's hands. Nothing draws people in quicker than all the impressive artwork in the **Magic** multiverse. Allow him or her to capture the feel of **Magic**. Just as you have fond memories of ripping open packages, allow the new player that thrill of looking through these mysterious new cards for the first time. Next comes the question of just what a new player needs to know and in what order. As someone who has taught the game to literally hundreds of people (many while working in a game store), I've discovered that there is a logical order that tends to be the easiest for people to follow. I have found the following to be very effective:

1) **What are all these cards?** The first thing you have to explain is that every card represents a spell. The one exception to this is land, which is used to pay for the spells.

2) **Why are there different colors?** You should then explain that each spell has a color (or is considered colorless), and each of these colors represents a different type of magic. You should explain the basic nature of each color: black magic is the magic of death and corruption, blue magic is the magic of illusion and trickery, white magic is the magic of purity and order, green magic is the magic of life and nature, and red magic is the magic of chaos and destruction. You should also mention some creatures which are typically associated with each color, and the land type which produces the mana needed to cast those spells. You might also mention that wizards can use artifacts to aid them in their battles, and artifacts aren't associated with any particular color.

3) **So how exactly do I use these spells?** Point out where the casting cost is located on the cards and explain that each spell has a cost associated with using it. Demonstrate how different lands produce this necessary mana. You may want to lay out some land and give the new player a few spells to see if he or she can figure out what can be cast.

4) **Instant—what does that mean?** Separate the different type of spells (creatures, enchantments, instants, etc.) and explain to the new player, in very general terms, how each type of spell is used. *Summon* spells call creatures to your aid. *Artifact* spells bring artifacts for you to use. *Sorceries* are spells that can do all sorts of things, but that are only usable at a specific time on your own turn. *Enchantments* are spells which stay in the game, usually affecting a creature, artifact, land, or other enchantment. Like sorceries, these can only be cast during a specific time on your turn. *Instants* and *interrupts* are spells that can be used at almost any time to affect either things in play or other spells being cast. (Note that until the player has a firm grasp of the game, you're going to want to gloss over the basic issues of timing. Just let him or her know that there is a difference between instants and interrupts, a difference that will be explained later.)

5) **When do I do all this?** Explain that the game has certain sections (called phases) that occur each turn. (You might want to refer to the ***Magic: The Gathering***—*Fourth Edition* rulebook for a summary of these steps.)

At this point, most people will be a little confused. Tell your new player that things will make more sense as you play a sample game.

Step Seven: Begin Playing

For your first game, you are going to want to play open-handed—the cards in each player's hand should be laid face up. Let the beginner go first, allowing the individual the opportunity to make his or her own move if possible. If he or she is confused, explain the options but still try to allow that player to choose what to do. A common mistake that players make when teaching is to basically play a game with themselves as the new player just watches. This only tends to isolate the beginner from the game; he or she feels like an observer rather than a participant.

It's also okay if the new player makes some basic strategic mistakes. Right now you are teaching the rules, not the strategy, of the game. Don't get sidetracked into explaining subtleties of **Magic** before a new player understands the basic principles. New players also tend to be confused by the parts of the game that they aren't using right now—the upkeep phase, for example. In general, you will want to refrain from a detailed explanation of any element of the game until the new player needs to understand it to actually play. There are several advantages to postponing elaborate explanations. First, it simplifies the early parts of the game and allows you to concentrate on the few rules that do apply. Second, it gives you a chance to slowly introduce new concepts a few at a time to keep the beginner from feeling overwhelmed. And third, since these explanations will only occur when necessary, it gives the new player a better understanding of the purpose of any new aspect of the game.

Step Eight: Follow Up the First Game

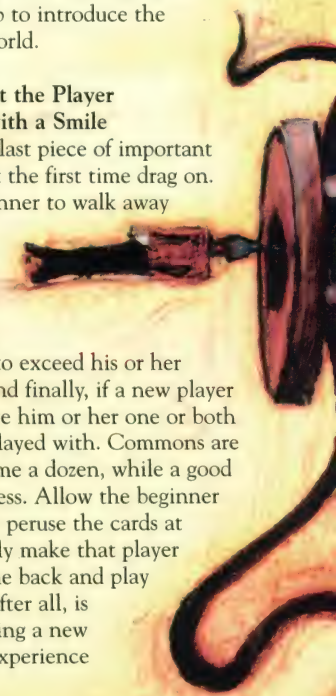
After finishing the first game, take a moment to stop and see what the new player has managed to pick up. Gauge how confident he or she is about the rules and allow the player the opportunity to ask any questions he or she has. Remember that **Magic** can be a bit disorienting the first time it is played. Be aware of this and give the beginner a chance to decompress before you begin another game. Once you have deduced how well the first game went, you will want to adjust how the second game is played. (Also, if the new player is too overwhelmed, you might want to consider putting off the second game until another time.) If you think the beginner has a good handle on the game, let him or her try playing with a closed hand (meaning that only the players see their own hands). If the new player is still a bit confused, play a second open-handed game.

Step Nine: Add in New Aspects

If the new player is picking up the game rather quickly, you will want to make sure that you keep the experience fresh. Trade decks and allow him or her the opportunity to try playing with new cards. If the beginner wants more, add a few cards with new abilities that you haven't explained into the decks; the key is to make the player aware that **Magic** is a game of infinite possibilities. This is also a good point at which to introduce other aspects of **Magic**: trading and collecting, for example. Tell some stories of how you managed to acquire a card you are proud of (and, of course, show the new player your brilliant acquisition). The key is to make the beginner realize that the game doesn't simply stop when the cards are put away in a box; **Magic** is as much an environment as it is a game. As the person explaining the game, it is your job to introduce the beginner to this world.

Step Ten: Let the Player Leave with a Smile

Probably the last piece of important advice is to not let the first time drag on. You want the beginner to walk away from the game eager to play again. It is better to have a new player stop prematurely than to exceed his or her tolerance level. And finally, if a new player likes the game, give him or her one or both of the decks you played with. Commons are quite literally a dime a dozen, while a good opponent is priceless. Allow the beginner the opportunity to peruse the cards at leisure—it will only make that player more eager to come back and play again. And that, after all, is what makes teaching a new player a positive experience for everyone.



by Daniel Wixman

Magic in the Netherlands

As the tournament season was nearing its height and national championships were being played around the world, Seattle-area **Magic**™ player Daniel Wixman set out to attend the Dutch championships. The **Magic** community had become truly global, and this was his first chance to find out how **Magic** (and **Magic** players) might be different in another country. He soon found that although everyone was playing the same game, nothing—from the price of a Sinkhole to the prevalence of Disenchant—could be taken for granted.

The plane banks, revealing Shilpol Airport and Amsterdam; the wheels finally touch down and I've arrived—the city of Eindhoven and Games Spectacular IV await! As a tournament veteran from Seattle, I'm looking forward to attending the Dutch national championship at Games Spectacular IV and getting my first taste of "foreign" **Magic**.

After weeks of planning, I still can't believe I'm really here…until I hit customs. Now I believe it. I was hoping to pay my expenses in The Netherlands by selling part of my collection, and the Dutch consulate had assured me that because the cards were printed in Europe, they could get back in without a problem. Unfortunately, over six thousand **Magic** cards present a bit of a problem to three customs inspectors who hadn't talked to the same person I had talked to. The customs people eventually decide that **Magic** cards are too new a phenomenon to be in the rules. After telling me how to pronounce "Eindhoven," they send me on my way.

Knowing that out-of-print cards are even more highly valued in Europe, my strategy is to sell cards up through *Legends*™; unfortunately, *Fourth Edition*™ comes out while I'm on the plane! Had I made the trip one week earlier, I would have been hundreds of guilders ahead—had I left a week later, I would have packed my bag five kilos lighter. Oh well.

After getting into town, I walk around all day before finding a place to play (and perhaps sell) **Magic**. I find an inviting store and the owner ends up bending my ear for quite some time—the conversation is interesting, but he wants to be near the cash register in front while I want to watch the **Magic** games in back. (I'm also carrying about twenty kilos of cards in my backpack, and it's getting heavier by the minute!)

Finally, he gets down to the traditional **Magic** pastime of cleaning out the new kid. Aside from the coming of *Fourth Edition*, I don't find too many surprises in the way he prices cards. The exchange rate is easy to calculate ($1.00 to fl.1.50), and most prices are straight translations. *Arabian Nights*™ and commons from *Unlimited*™ seem to draw the most interest. (I miss a few, though; he takes all my Sinkholes, even the betas—they must have been too cheap.) The total sale is fl.511. I knock it down to an even fl.500 with an inward sigh. The next four days are covered.

After the store closes, I find a game at a café across the street. My opponent is younger than I, between twelve and fifteen. Out of the fourteen decks I'm traveling with, I select one called "Aikido." It's blue and white, slow and totally reactive. It proves to be my worst possible choice.

My first game against a Dutch player pits Aikido against a card-denial deck based on Hymn to Tourach. Hymn can't be neutralized by Eye for an Eye or Reverse Damage, and Hypnotic Specters can't be shut down by Spirit Link or Backfire. Waiting for a Control Magic, I'm running out of counterspells. The only real damage in Aikido is four Psionic Blasts, and I can't kill anyone who doesn't try to kill me. He certainly isn't trying hard enough, but he eventually manages to finish me off anyway.

An older player joins in to make it a threesome. I'm trying to get a feel for the Dutch "style," but with three colors and no central theme, his deck is hard to type. I switch to Scorched Earth, a classic Type I land destroyer. The older player gets enough mana out to summon a Serra Angel. He then uses Swords to Plowshares to remove my Will-O'-The-Wisps, and takes out my Vampire Bats and the younger player's Hypnotic Specters with Lightning Bolts. Our decks are both designed to seize control against a single opponent. Not surprisingly, the older gentleman wins.

Later that night, I return to the Holiday Inn, one of the hotels affiliated with Games Spectacular IV. I find a game with Glenn Goddard, the owner of a major retail store in Arizona. He refers to his deck as, "oh, just a little creatureless deck I've been playing with." Apparently I didn't need to leave the country to find unusual play styles—his deck is far more foreign than anything I've seen here. I use "White and Shifty," a fast, inexpensive deck.

His deck is red and white, using Earthquake and CoP: Red. Balance and Earthquake strip me of creatures, and Inferno adds to the damage. His Fireballs and Lightning Bolts are left to clear away flyers. I will later see decks built around similar themes in the championship.

Backgrounds by Drew Tucker
Photographs provided by Daniel Wixman

Friday is Liberation Day, celebrating Holland's liberation from the Nazis fifty years ago. Everything is closed, except for the cafes, bars, and Games Spectacular IV. I start seriously selling cards, and sales are good—if I don't spend much, perhaps I have enough to last a week. Then again, I'm an optimist.

I begin looking at the decks being played in the preliminaries for the championship. Almost every deck has some white in it, for Disenchant if for no other card. Decks seem to have been assembled one spell at a time, and then trimmed back (to reduce the number of colors, not the number of cards). Many players use defensive cards rarely seen in tournament decks back home—Samite Healer, Circles of Protection, Wrath of God, Balance, Righteousness, Stream of Life. Creatureless decks are much more common here. I slowly learn that the Balance deck drives local deck-building technology.

I make friends with Peter, owner of Magic Friends in Lyden. **Magic** time is measured in expansions, not months or years. Peter is post-*Legends*™. I am late-*Antiquities*™. He cannot understand my determination to play in an "Iron Man" tournament tonight. (In "Iron Man" **Magic**, when a card is destroyed, it is really destroyed, whether it's ripped up, burned, or shredded.)

"I never opened an *Unlimited* booster," he says. "I bled for my Moxes."

"I traded hard for mine, too, but we're not putting cards like that at risk here."

"I would never tear up money," he replies.

"I am not tearing up money. I am tearing up cards."

I wave a Spirit Link from *Legends* under his nose. "How much was this worth last week? How much today?" I wave my arms to include the cards, the show, everything. "This could be 1600 and tulips all over again."

He concedes my point. Later he will watch the Iron Man and cheer as loudly as anyone.



Sunday is the day for the championship finals. All of the quarter-finalists have red and white in their decks. Some are built around those colors, and some use them as accents. In the eight decks there are twenty-four Balances! In Seattle, I know very few people who play Balance.

As I watch, patterns emerge. At home, tournament decks tend to fall into two broad groups: rabid-attack, creature decks, or decks that establish and hold control. Here, defense is paramount and regaining control is more important than keeping it forever. There seems to be a sense of *sente* or tempo here, as in Go or chess. Players here find it more important to keep an opponent reacting so he can't make actions of his own.

Stoffer Van Dijk has a card-denial deck that's mostly black aside from Lightning Bolts, Fireballs, and two Disenchants. "Every deck needs at least two Disenchants," says Stoffer.

Arjan Salomous calls his deck "old-fashioned." Earthquake, eight assorted counterspells, and White Knights are his stand-bys. With so many Armageddons and Balances about, he relies on "cards that don't need much mana" and keeps four Order of Leitbur in his sideboard. He keeps track of the contents of graveyards as carefully as a bridge player counts suits.

Edwin Van der Wal relies on Armageddon backed by Black Vise and Ankh of Mishra. He has red for destruction and green for Tranquility. His deck was built and tuned in two weeks.

The final match is between Freek Ten Catel of Groningen, and John Bol of Enschede. Both decks have elements in common—Racks, Mishra's Factories, Disenchants, Lightning Bolts. Freek has added green and black to his deck for Tranquility and Mind Twist. John seems to be straight red and white, Power Surge and Earthquake.

Freek wins. Despite his exhaustion after the intense finals, he agrees to a short interview. "I hate my deck," he declares. "The Balance deck has changed **Magic**. Creatures aren't as good anymore, and they are more fun to play. With Balance on the (Duelists' Convocation) Restricted List, there will be no more stand-offs." When pressed for deck-construction tips, he simply says, "Make more fun decks."

Your American decks have no staying power." He waves at the ruins of "Elephants Forever," a green and white, elephant speed deck.

A few days after the finals, I've found myself at Kompainski, a tavern in Amsterdam that's a local **Magic** hang-out. "Elephants Forever" hasn't fared well. Like most speed decks, it opens fast and runs out of steam mid-game; usually there isn't even a mid-game.

An early Balance kept me short of mana, as I had saved the Elephants rather than the Elves. His Samite Healers made attacking with my 1/1 creatures (even ones with first strike) suicidal. When I finally had him on the ropes with an Armies of Allah and about eight points of trample damage, he played Wrath of God and Armageddon! From a white weenie deck? I could expect Armageddon, but Wrath of God? I'm relieved when he asks to play against my "White and Shifty" deck.

"It'll take yours," I confidently predict. "It's got Armies of Allah and Morale, and the Serra Angels keep it from really being a weenie deck."

The game goes as predicted. My deck is as fast as his and recovers from the leveling spells as quickly. Crusades are played and Disenchanted depending on the balance of power. I have a shifting threat with Icatian Scouts, Icatian Priests, and Order of Leitbur. Combined with the instants that I keep playing, the threat is too much—twice.

"Can I see the deck please?" I pass it over. Since the show in Eindhoven, I have been living off the proceeds of my sales. Back in Amsterdam, the guilders are running thin and the crowd in Kompainski is trading and playing, but not buying.

"This is not a fifty-dollar deck," he says suddenly. "Four Serras, four Armies of Allah?"

"No, three of each and only two Crusades." I show him a list of the deck's contents. "The difference is the Deserts and Armies of Allah. Four Deserts, fourteen dollars—that's fl.21. They are what around here, fl.30, fl.40, nee?" I was trying to adopt the local idiom. I was learning local prices. I was also willing to part the deck out.

"You would sell this deck for fl.75, same as in American?" I nod. "I buy it, I will keep it as it is. I like it."

Photo: The author holds up a burning Rukh Egg, another casualty of Ironman **Magic**.

"I am honored, truly." I was—I had seen some strong decks that night and these were the fun decks.

We play on late into the night. The place finally closes down, shortly after the excellent transit system. Some things remain the same.

"You have unlimited life, unlimited turns, and unlimited mana! I call that winning!"

The man has been babbling somewhat incoherently for the last five minutes. I understand what he's saying about Fastbond and Dark Heart of the Woods, but I'm missing how he gets the forests back. And why do you have to keep three cards in your hand? Then again, I'm somewhat distracted.

This was De Eerste Kamer in Lyden. Named after "The Upper Chamber" of the Dutch legislature, it is a rather typical local "coffee shop." What passes for air in here is thickly laced with the aromas of dark Dutch tobacco.

I'm in the middle of a long blue-on-blue duel. My deck is "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle," a quick, inexpensive, all-blue flying deck that uses Unsummon, Boomerang, and Enchantment Alteration to maximize the utility of Unstable Mutation. He is running a Stasis deck with enough white for Serra Angels and Divine Transformation. With Skull of Orm, he can recycle enchantments from the graveyard; I lose mine once they evaporate.

Despite the difference in the cost of our decks, we have been remarkably well-matched for a long time. Now the tides are turning against me. My poor Ghost Ship has just acquired its third Control Magic, and then he gets his Time Elemental down. I throw everything at him before he can play another Stasis (or the same one again).

He pumps both of his Skulls to bring back Divine Transformation (for the Serra) and the Stasis. I count; he still has enough mana to power the Time Elemental. I concede what has been a very long game.

Later, a five-way, "star" game is proposed. I go for "Elephants Forever," first dropping in two newly acquired Killer Bees.

I draw Elephant Graveyard, a plains, green creatures, and white instants. My situation doesn't improve.

When the first Graveyard hits the table, it causes quite a stir. "'Regenerates Elephant or Mammoth,' wow!" Lyden has come late to **Magic**, and no one has seen the card before. My cards sell briskly, and my attention is often drawn from the game by prospective buyers. The game ends up not taking much attention anyway.

Sales are good. Out-of-print commons and uncommons through *The Dark*™ are in great demand. Peter has purchased "Kobolds Über Alles," featuring four Gauntlets of Might and four Alpha Orcish Oriflammes. He hadn't even heard of Alpha Oriflammes before—they only cost one red and one colorless mana, instead of one red and three colorless. That's a big difference in a deck with only sixteen lands.

On Thursday, an impromptu tournament is held. I dust off Scorched Earth, my only tournament-quality deck. Although it uses legendary lands instead of Moxes, it performs well. My hosts are surprised to see creatures in a land destroyer. Peter, running the Kobolds, is my toughest opponent until the semi-finals.

My opponent opens: swamp, Dark Ritual, Vampire Bats, Erg Raiders. I have seen this deck before, but on another continent. I stumble for mana, always fatal against the black speed deck. The final match ends up being between two black speed decks.

As I travel, I learn the Dutch don't care for the quick black deck, preferring a much more balanced approach. I believe speed deck technology will push them toward faster, more offensive decks, similar to what I see in the Pacific Northwest.

Before returning home, I visit Groningen; everywhere I have gone, I've been told that Groningen has the strongest players in Holland. On Saturday, the nice folks at Wir War, the local game store, put me in touch with Freek, the new national champion and a Groningen resident. He and his friends will meet tonight to play and I am invited!

The crew ends up including the last national champion as well. Many here are serious gamers—former backgammon, chess, and duplicate bridge tournament players. The rules are explained to me: we will play partners and rotate after each hand until each possible pairing has played. The structure is a dance as formal as duplicate bridge, and I can see where it will show weaknesses in decks. It could be a powerful development tool.

The bombshell drops—we are playing for ante! I chicken out and go for "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle." The scarcest cards in it are Flying Men and Deserts.

Freek's deck is white with Urza's Lands. He is playing with Su-Chi and has no place to dump the four colorless mana he gets when Su-Chi goes to the graveyard—anyone paired with him loses. At one point, someone looks at my Air Elementals and asks, "You got any heavy hitters in that deck?" Three hands pass like lightning. I am ahead a Black Knight and an Urza's Power Plant, behind a signed Boomerang. The Boomerang is a big hit with Maarten, the player who won it.

The tables are rearranged for a second set, and I look for a faster deck, only to realize that my two fastest decks have been sold. I settle on a *Macbeth* variant, using Thelonite Druid ("When Burnam Wood to Dunstan come..."). I learn a valuable lesson—in Holland, you play your mana creatures first. A Type II land destroyer (Armageddon, Strip Mines, Swords to Plowshares) quickly Vises me to death. I know my partner is waiting for my Wheel of Fortune, but it never clears my hand as every source of mana I put down is wiped off the board.

This time I have the losing deck and go down three for three. Trading to get my cards back is pleasantly easy; I trade signed cards to the delight of my hosts. I try to draw them into technical deck construction talk, asking them to share the secrets of **Magic** in Holland. They laugh and reply, "Tell your readers that our decks are just better."



Photo: Freek Ten Catel (right) defeats John Bol (left) to become the Dutch national champion.


"At 451°F
the heat is
enough to cause a
third degree burn
HOT
... 1200°F
liquefies steel,
melts the polar ice cap
and creates
global warming"
HOTTER
The HOTTEST...
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MAGIC

THE ACCESSORIES

DATABASES, MY DEAR WATSON

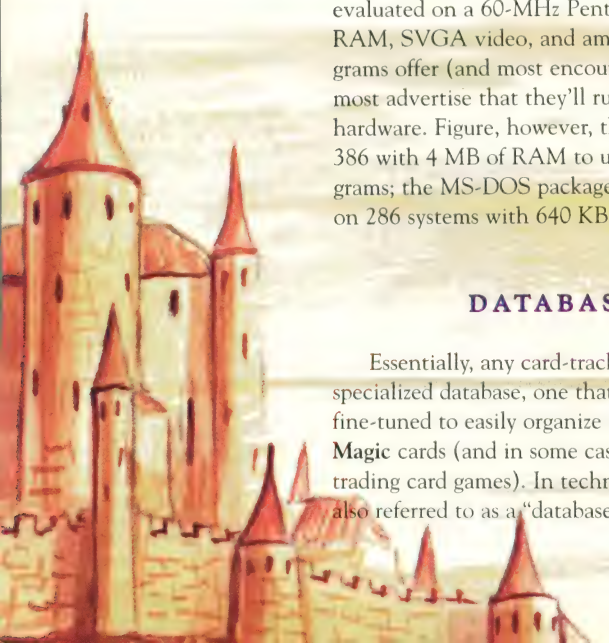
by John C. Bunnell

It's easy to accumulate an amazing number of **Magic**™ cards without quite realizing how many you've got. A couple of starter decks here, a booster pack or two there, a box of *Fallen Empires*™ picked up at a substantial discount—it doesn't seem like all that many. But once you've designed four or five playing decks and tried to assemble a trading list, you realize that you need help keeping track of your hoard.

The good news is that there's no shortage of help available; a number of computer software packages have popped up for the express purpose of organizing your **Magic** card collection. The challenge is making a choice between the various offerings—especially because most of the vendors offer their products chiefly by mail order, so you don't see the product until you buy it.

The following discussion covers most of the major commercial card-tracking software on the market. Included in the review are two DOS-based programs (**Deck Daemon**™ and **CardMaster**™) and three Windows-based programs (**Deck Daemon**, **FrankenCard**™, and **GameCard Wizard**™). **GameCard Wizard** offers an MS-DOS version which was not tested, and a Macintosh version of **Deck Daemon** is advertised as being under development.

Versions reviewed were the most current available at the time of writing, but generally pre-dated *Fourth Edition*™ and the *Ice Age*™ expansion set. Software was evaluated on a 60-MHz Pentium system with 8 MB of RAM, SVGA video, and ample hard disk space. All programs offer (and most encourage) mouse support, and most advertise that they'll run on much less powerful hardware. Figure, however, that you should have at least a 386 with 4 MB of RAM to use any of the Windows programs; the MS-DOS packages should work, albeit slowly, on 286 systems with 640 KB of RAM.



DATABASES 'R' US

Essentially, any card-tracking program is a specialized database, one that's been customized and fine-tuned to easily organize information about **Magic** cards (and in some cases, cards from other trading card games). In techno-speak, this is sometimes also referred to as a "database application."

What this means is that, in many respects, all five programs discussed herein are very similar. They're all pre-packed with much the same information, perform many of the same functions, and organize the data in similar ways. At the same time, each is also strikingly different from the others—but the differences have as much to do with appearance as with technical characteristics.

"Appearance" in this context, though, means more than just a pretty screen. **Magic** wizards shouldn't have to understand the language of professional data-wrangling in order to keep their computer records up to date, and a feature that takes five minutes to find had better not be one you'll want to use often.

I haven't tried to rank each of the following programs on an absolute scale, mostly because different users may find different software best for their particular purposes. But the individual summaries that follow do touch on each program's specific strengths and weaknesses, and the group does have some definite winners and also-rans.

CARDMASTER 1.3

(MS-DOS; $29.95 + $3.50 s&h)

Sky Hi Sales, P.O. Box 424, Barker, TX 77413; (800) 949-4267

If there's a one-word description for **CardMaster**, it's "cluttered." There are plenty of features and a colorful text-based interface, but it's necessary to wade through several layers of menus to get at them, and novice computer users may find the on-line help a bit sparse.

On the positive side, **CardMaster**'s design is deliberately modular; Sky Hi Sales says it plans to complement the program's **Magic** database with a module for the **Star Trek**™ game, and is looking at other games for future modules. Each module gets a menu choice on the main program bar, and gets its own dedicated sub-program. That makes excellent technical sense, as it allows Sky Hi to tailor its databases to specifically reflect each individual game's design features. But it makes opening any particular module a two-step process—first you have to run **CardMaster**, then you load the appropriate database. Likewise, you can't get out of the program without going through both layers of the menu system.

Backgrounds by Mark Poole

The one thing you can do from the outer menu, apart from loading a game database, is to access the program's Auction feature. This is **CardMaster**'s other unique element, meant to enable enterprising collectors to conduct auctions in the busy cyberspace card bazaars. It's a good idea, but there are holes in the implementation (you can't change an auction's name, and if you don't initially name an auction, you won't be able to tell you created one the next time you look), and it doesn't belong all by itself on the program's top layer.

Once you get to it, the card-handling interface is fairly straightforward, and the information provided for each card is reasonably complete. There's one noteworthy oddity, however, in the way the software handles editions and expansion sets. For the basic card set, referred to by **CardMaster** as "The Gathering," a screen option asks you to identify each card as Alpha, Beta, *Unlimited*, or *Revised*. The trouble is that each card in each expansion set also must be defined in one of these four categories, and there is no "null" setting. So a card from *Arabian Nights* would also have to be defined as being either Alpha, Beta, *Unlimited*, or *Revised*, which is confusing for cards that have actually appeared in the basic set (for instance, Kird Ape). An additional side effect is that updating the software to allow for *Fourth Edition* may present compatibility problems.

CardMaster's deck-building and testing interface is comparable to most of its fellows, if a little peculiar. You're allowed to construct a deck more or less freely, although you're warned if you use cards that you don't have or if you use cards in violation of the Duelists' Convocation's Banned or Restricted lists. (It's unclear how these lists will be updated to reflect changes made by the Duelists' Convocation.) You also get a detailed statistical profile of the deck's contents.

There is no printed manual; you are referred to the on-line help for all operations beyond installing the software. And while the help text is crisply written, it's too concise for novice users and experimenters, both of whom are likely to find quirks in the interface that the help information doesn't cover.

Deck Daemon 1.2

(MS-DOS; $29.95 + $5.00 s&h)

Bard's Quest Software, Inc. 620 Vista, Suite C
Boise, ID 83705; (208) 336-9404 x715;
fax (208) 336-9315; BBS (208) 345-6121

The designers of **Deck Daemon** are clearly people who know and understand **Magic**—and not just in terms of the game itself. There are features here for avid duelists and busy traders, and Bard's Quest leads its fellow software vendors in offering a variety of optional prebuilt playing decks (labeled Daemon Decks) for users to test on-line and off.

The text-based interface is straightforward and well-organized. The italic font in which most listings appear isn't ideal for long-term viewing, however, and definitely looks best at VGA or better video resolution. (It also sometimes lingers after you've exited the program, but the manual acknowledges this glitch and gives a solution.)

Card listings can easily be sorted in any of five different orders (by card title, by expansion, by color, by card type, and by expansion with colors grouped together).

Adding card inventory is a touch laborious, however, and occasionally requires manipulating the data in a less-than-elegant fashion. If, for instance, you have a mint-condition Vesuvan Doppelganger, and another that's seen heavy use, you need to copy the listing so that two entries for Vesuvan Doppelganger appear in the master file.

A more serious problem with the database design is that it doesn't—at least in the version reviewed—allow for distinguishing core-release cards by edition. Cards not part of an expansion set are defined as "Gathering" (abbreviated "M:tG"), but there is no space on the card-description screen for specifying whether your Black Lotus is an Alpha or Beta card. Cards promoted from expansion sets into the *Revised* card set are marked with an asterisk, but not double-listed—if your Amulet of Kroog is from *Fourth Edition* rather than from *Antiquities*, you'll have to change or copy the description to indicate this. You'll also have to correct the spelling of "Margaret Organ-Keen," as Bard's Quest accurately reproduces the error on the original card. Finally, you'll need to enter all card-value information by hand—the MS-DOS version of **Deck Daemon**, is the only program reviewed that doesn't support **Scrye on Disk™**.



CardMaster's playtesting screen

All the effort of entering card data, though, can be well worth it. Ambitious wheelers and dealers in particular may find **Deck Daemon** useful, as it provides for keeping track not just of the cards you've traded but of the people you've traded them with. This feature adds depth to the software and demonstrates an understanding by Bard's Quest of the **Magic** playing environment. Another series of screens, aptly labeled "Trivia," gives a lively overview of your collection's financial and strategic highlights. Unfortunately, the Trivia screens are one of the few things **Deck Daemon** won't print. The report-printing utilities will generate a useful range of lists and summaries, but this isn't one of them.

There's a lot of good in **Deck Daemon**. But in other ways, it's the most primitive of the programs in this lineup, and its age shows in some important respects.

Deck Daemon 1.0

(Windows; $29.95 + $5.00 s&h)

Bard's Quest Software, Inc. 620 Vista, Suite C,
Boise, ID 83705; (208) 336-9404 x715;
fax (208) 336-9315; BBS (208) 345-6121

Though it has the same name and much of the same content, the Windows version of **Deck Daemon** is by no means a clone of its MS-DOS counterpart. There are sharp, visual card-style views, colorful icons, and even more features than the MS-DOS version. Bard's Quest deserves considerable credit for adapting the design of its original software to take advantage of the Windows environment, rather than just cloning its earlier product.

In particular, the Windows version addresses the major design problem of its predecessor; series identifiers exist in this version for Alpha, Beta, *Unlimited*, and *Revised* cards. There's a trade-off for this, though, as no provision exists for noting a card's condition in the main Windows software. You can record condition information for cards bought, sold, and traded by enabling "Collector Mode," but this information seems to be kept separate and can't be referenced in the primary card-viewing windows.

At the same time, there are complications. Beware, for instance, of transferring data from the MS-DOS version of **Deck Daemon** to the Windows program. You won't lose information—but you'll add the mis-designed Alpha, Beta, *Unlimited*, and *Revised* card designations for expansion cards to the Windows database, and price information for those cards won't be modified when you use **SCRYE on Disk** or ***Conjure* on Disk™** to update your card values. And custom decks built with the MS-DOS software don't appear to be transferable into the Windows program at all.

Also be wary of **Deck Daemon**'s tolerance for anything resembling an eccentric video driver setting. When accessed under a 1024x768 SVGA driver using "large fonts," menu commands wrap incorrectly and operating buttons are inaccessible in many windows. Changing the driver to 1024x768 resolution with "normal fonts" solved the problem, but it's annoying that the documentation doesn't address this.

Deck Daemon's individual card information display



On the plus side, the new Windows engine allows vastly increased flexibility in sorting and filtering the card lists. As an example, you can view a list of all the rare cards from *The Dark*, and you can have the list sorted by artist. None of the other programs come close to matching this level of data-shuffling power. The process of setting up these custom-sorted lists is a bit tedious, though on balance, the program's versatility is a definite strength.

There is still room for polish in **Deck Daemon**'s Windows version. The useful "Collector Mode" features, including the MS- DOS program's trader-tracking abilities, are headquartered deep in a sub-menu, out of easy reach. The non-adjustable window sizes are likely to frustrate users with higher-end equipment. And the process of "upgrading" from the MS-DOS software to the Windows package needs a major overhaul. But a lot of work has gone into this release, and it shows in the product.

FRANKENCARD FOR WINDOWS 1.1E

(Windows; $19.95 + s&h)

Geekware, Inc., 5023 W. 20th Ave., Suite 126, Broomfield, CO 80020; (303) 465-2849; twajjo@geekware.com

At $19.95, there isn't a better value on the card-tracking market than **FrankenCard**. Nor is there a cleaner, friendlier software package commercially available. Its feature set isn't as rich as some of its competitors, but as a general-use **Magic** collection database, it's difficult to beat.

Almost everything **FrankenCard** does is visible from one expansive information window. But it's a clean, well-organized window, where everything you need to know about a given card is presented right up front. **FrankenCard** defaults to this single-card view, rather than to a long list of cards, and operates on the theory that when you're actually using the software, you mostly want to see one card at a time. You can still print all manner of lists and reports, and preview them onscreen if you like, but you'll spend most of your time in **FrankenCard** on the main "catalogue editing screen." The potential downside of this design is that you really need high-resolution VGA—no less than 800x600—to use the software effectively. It will operate in 640x480 mode, but you'll spend a lot of time scrolling around the window.

Despite the single-card view, entering your card data into the system is remarkably painless. Cards are organized at two levels: editions and catalogues. Each expansion set (or edition of the basic set) is an edition, while all the cards you own constitute a catalogue. A handy button bar makes moving through the card sets quick and easy; a scrollable card list is a menu command away, and another menu command filters cards by color or type. You can't work with more than one edition at a time, except when printing reports, but the program moves briskly enough through the lists that this is rarely an inconvenience.

The deck-building utility is likewise easy to use, and has the unique ability to export decks so that one **FrankenCard** user can share his or her diabolical designs with another. An accessory disk of custom-built decks is also available from Geekware, with more promised for the future.

The user-friendliness extends in other directions as well. **FrankenCard**'s help screens and user manual are unusually well-written, combining clear descriptions and a minimum of cyber-jargon with mild-mannered humor.

A wealth of customer support is available, too. Besides supporting **SCRYE on Disk**, Geekware and Infinity Comics & Games offer a parallel ***Infinity* on Disk™** electronic price-update service in text, Excel, and .IOD formats, the last of which is itself SCRYE-compatible. Geekware is offering existing **FrankenCard** users a discount on its *Fourth Edition* update if they can receive the file via e-mail. And the company has announced forthcoming Franken-ware for both **Star Trek** and **Illuminati: New World Order™**, with the latter incorporating actual card text under license from Steve Jackson Games.

This last point does bring up **FrankenCard**'s notable weak spot. The **FrankenCard** database has some odd ideas about card rarity as compared with the rest of the world. A quick look at a few cards from the *Antiquities* expansion illustrates the point: According to **FrankenCard**, Ashnod's Battle Gear, the various Strip Mines, and the various Mishra's Factories are rare cards; most other sources list them as uncommon. **FrankenCard** says that Urza's Mine and Urza's Power Plant (all versions) are uncommon; most other sources list them as common. The four Urza's Towers are also generally described as common cards; **FrankenCard** says three of them are uncommon, while the "plains" version of the card is rare.

Since a database lives and dies by the accuracy of its data, that's a grave problem—and it's hard to tell, without

making a card-by-card survey, what other errors are lurking in the **FrankenCard** information set. Purchasers and users should take note and double-check the data provided on cards they consider important.

But while errors in the data can't be dismissed lightly, neither can smooth, efficient programming and unmatched ease of use. On that basis, **FrankenCard** is a major player in the card-tracking business.

GAMECARD WIZARD 1.1C

(Windows; $39.95 + $5 s&h)

DIGITAL Alchemy, 11469 Olive Blvd. #223, St. Louis, MO 63341; (800) 566-6277

What you buy with a copy of **Gamecard Wizard** is a great deal of data. My disk arrived with card information for all **Magic** sets through *Fallen Empires*, but that was just the start. There were also card lists for **Spellfire**™ (the first edition), **Jyhad**™, **Wyvern**™, **Super Deck**™, **Galactic Empires**™, and **Star Trek**™ (the limited edition). Moreover, the **Jyhad**, SPELLFIRE, and **Magic** card lists (except for *Fallen Empires*) came with prices attached. This is an astounding amount of information.

Unfortunately, that's about all that **Gamecard Wizard** has to recommend it. Though the range of data is astonishing, the depth of information provided is minimal, and is not really sufficient for either traders or players to assemble or maintain meaningful records.

Like **FrankenCard**, **Gamecard Wizard** packs all the information it offers into one main operating window. That data, though, is unacceptably sketchy. For its **Magic** lists, separated by edition or expansion set, the software includes only card color, card type, and degree of rarity—you aren't given so much as the casting cost, let alone the artist's name or a summary of the card text. The other games are treated with similarly hurried summaries, seemingly keyed to **SCRYE on Disk** codes (enumerated in the accompanying help file; there is no printed manual).

There's a further caution to be made with regard to the supplied price information: it's very likely to be out of date. Most of the files on the supplied installation disk, shipped in late April 1995, were dated November 1994. Only the README file and the **Wyvern** card list—supplied in .SOD format, but without prices—bore 1995 date stamps. Given the volatility of the trading market, that's potentially misleading, and nowhere in the on-line documentation is the dating of the price information specified. The README file does say that it's "sample" data, but you'd think that SCRYE and **DIGITAL Alchemy** would want to provide a more useful sample if the idea is to build good customer relations.

What the software does offer is a more or less infinitely customizable template. In addition to space for the card name, up to six characteristics can be described for any given card—but the programmers have only assigned information to two to four of these holes in the template, leaving roughly half the spaces open for users to fill in. Thus, in theory, you could assign one of these empty fields to "Artist" and another to "Casting Cost" for each **Magic** card set, and fill the data in yourself. The fields need not be consistently named from game to game—the space for "Artist" in **Wyvern** might be used for "Episode" in **Star Trek**. Needless to say, this is much more plausible in theory than in real life.

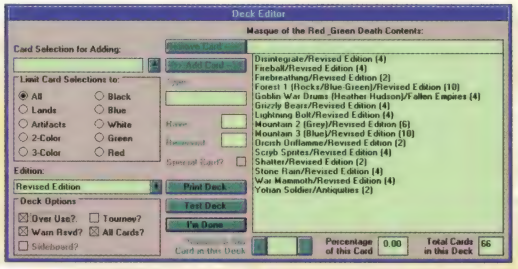
The multi-game platform and the minimalist design also extend to the feature set. There's no provision for sorting cards by anything other than card name, no deck-creation utility, and—though one printable report is titled "Computer-Aided Trader"—no way to track card condition or dealings with specific trading partners. A "Local" price field is offered in addition to the three obligatory SCRYE values, but this too must be filled in by the user.

With a great deal of work and customization, a user might develop the template **Gamecard Wizard** provides into a workable trading-stock listing if nothing else. The relevant question is why you'd want to, when there's already software available to do it for you. Card collectors who deal in many different games may possibly find uses for this package. For serious devotees of **Magic**, however, its usefulness is at best highly limited.

RECOMMENDATIONS

There isn't a clear winner on the MS-DOS side of the fence; both **CardMaster** and **Deck Daemon** are legitimate options. Your choice will depend largely on your game interests—users with any interest in games other than **Magic** should consider **CardMaster** seriously, while those interested in powerful trade-tracking features may find **Deck Daemon** more attractive. And unless you absolutely have to have your software now, it may be worth waiting to see how both companies handle the upgrade and transition to *Fourth Edition*, which is likely to "break" both existing programs in one way or another.

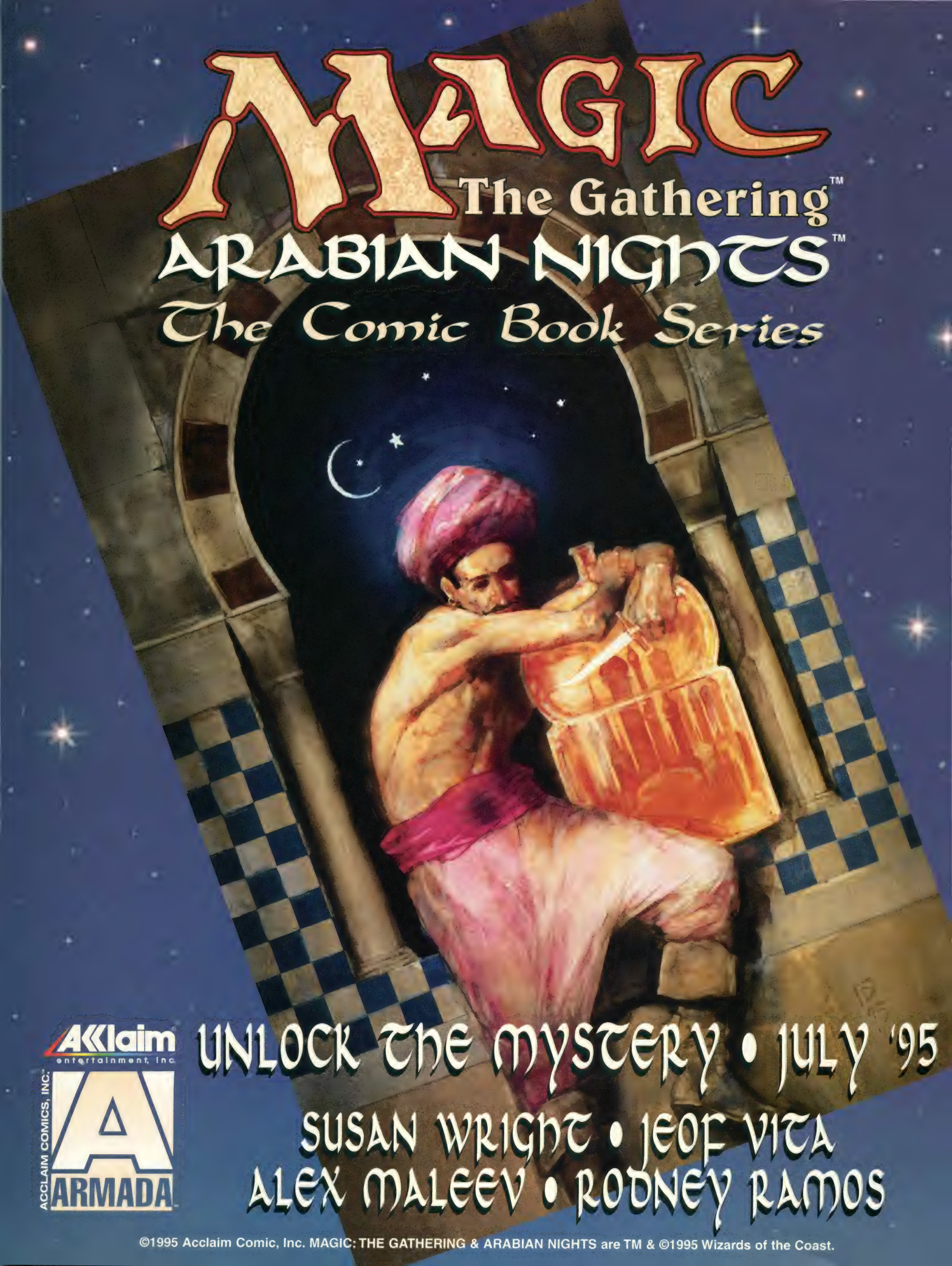
FrankenCard's deck editor



Users who prefer Windows software have a somewhat clearer choice. **Gamecard Wizard** is not a serious contender, save perhaps for the pure entrepreneur with boxes of cards from every game on the market. **Deck Daemon**, by contrast, is very rich in features and should get strong consideration from serious trade-meisters, as long as they don't try to transfer data from the MS- DOS version. It may also be worth checking with Bard's Quest regarding prospects for a 1.1 release.

For myself, though, **FrankenCard** is well-nigh irresistible, rarity glitches and all. This is software that's genuinely easy to use, modestly presented, and well-designed. It doesn't hurt that **FrankenCard**'s documentation is the best of the five programs, and it's the only one of the Windows packages with "system requirements" that clearly address video issues. (Both flavors of **Deck Daemon** also include adequate manuals, but the Windows booklet is notably vague about video requirements.) And the price is certainly right, though it may not last—retail for the **INWO** version of **FrankenCard** is $29.95 plus shipping.

Oh, yes. And after I'd finished telling **FrankenCard** about my collection, it obligingly informed me I had about 1,200 cards. Of course, that was before I picked up a *Fourth Edition* starter deck and three or four booster packs....



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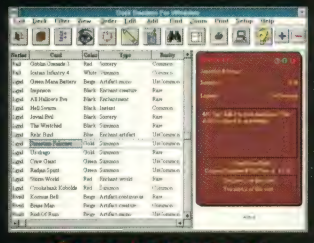
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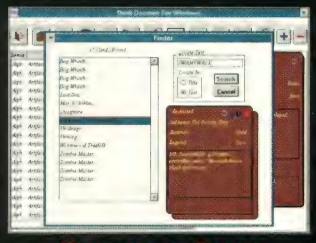
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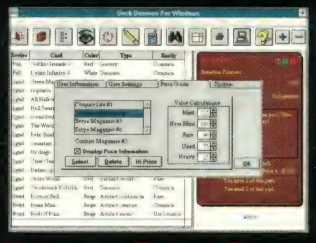
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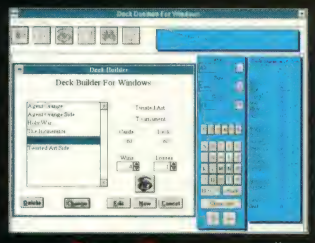
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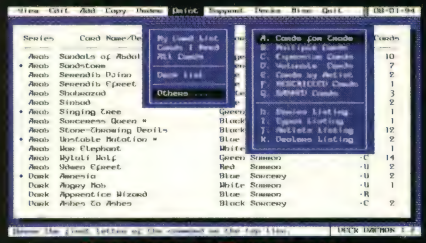


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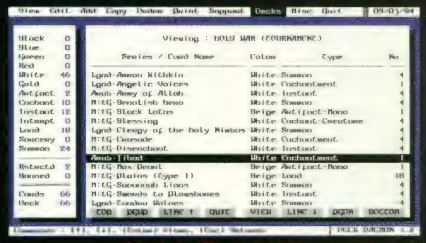
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House Rules

Some new ways (and some old ways) to play Magic

EMPEROR TEAM MAGIC UPDATE

by Andrew Finch and Tom Wylie

Emperor Team **Magic**™ was a popular variant even before the rules for it were published in *Duelist #2*. In this variant, two teams of either three or five players sit facing each other. The player in the middle on each side is the team "emperor," and the players on either side of the emperor are the "generals." (In a game with five-player teams, the players on either side of the generals are the "lieutenants.") The goal of each team is to eliminate the emperor of the opposing team. Players cannot attack directly across the table, but must work their way through the players sitting beside the emperor. All spells and effects have a limited range. For example, if the range is one, you can only target players or permanents no more than one seat away from you.

While the basic structure of Emperor Team **Magic** is sound, there are some problems which the standard rules don't address. In a two-player duel, for example,the strength of Mana Flare is balanced by the fact that it also helps your opponent; under standard Emperor rules, if Mana Flare is played by an emperor, it will typically only help out that emperor's team. The rules presented here attempt to fix some of these imbalances.

Deck construction rules

The deck construction rules most suited for Emperor play are the Type I and Type II deck construction rules from the Duelists' Convocation. If this model is used, restricted cards should be limited to one per team rather than one per deck. Also, Eureka should be added to the banned list; if an emperor plays it following a mass-draw effect such as Wheel of Fortune, the effect is overwhelming.

Range of effects

Range should be one for all spells and effects in a game with three-member teams, or two in a game with five-player teams. Remember that effects which apply to "all players," "all lands," and so on only apply within range of the person controlling the spell or effect.

The range of your spells is determined by where you are sitting, but the range of the abilities and effects of your permanents is determined by where your permanents are located. For example, in a game with five-player teams, an emperor can only use a Lightning Bolt to affect players on her team. But if the emperor has a Prodigal Sorcerer in the territory of her left lieutenant (two seats away), that Sorcerer can target the lieutenant and general on the opposing side.

Note that the emperors are typically unable to use effects that target opponents early in the game, since only their generals (and lieutenants in a five-player team) will be in range. For example, Rainbow Vale is not a great card in an emperor's deck, since it will be unusable until someone on the emperor's team is killed, bringing an opponent within range of the emperor.

Stacking of effects

Permanents with a "global," continuous effect are not cumulative. For example, if an emperor plays two Howling Mines, the players on either side of her only get to draw one extra card per draw phase, even if someone on the other side plays another Howling Mine. Having one emperor play multiple Howling Mines, Mana Flares, etc., gives one team too great of an advantage. Use your judgment when determining which cards this applies to.

Only one copy of a legend or legendary land may be in play at one time, regardless of range. Each emperor can't have a copy of Pendelhaven, for example. However, there may be multiple Enchant Worlds in play as long as their range doesn't overlap. If the ranges of two Enchant Worlds suddenly overlap as a result of a player being eliminated, both enchantments are buried.

Player elimination

When a player is removed from the game, all permanents in his playing area, all other permanents that player controls, and all other permanents that player owns are removed from the game. Even permanents owned by other players but controlled by the eliminated player are removed—they do not go to their owners' graveyards.

Look for the original Emperor Team **Magic** *rules in the new* **Magic: The Gathering** Pocket Players' Guide™ *available this fall.*

ADJUSTING TO ANTE

by Adam Conus

Playing for ante can add excitement to any game of **Magic**; unfortunately, many people give up on ante early in their **Magic** career. Any player can give you a hundred reasons not to play for ante—"my Nightmare, my Royal Assassin, my Shivan Dragon, my Vesuvan Doppelganger..."—but very few have experimented with it for any length of time. When conducted judiciously, a game for stakes can be relatively safe and very exciting. You also get to use all those cool ante cards in your collection that would otherwise just gather dust.

If you want to play for ante, but don't want to get burned, try following these suggestions:

Don't put cards you value highly in your deck. You should definitely include decent cards which your opponent would want to win, but don't play for ante with the pride of your collection. If you only use commons, nobody is going to want play your deck for ante, but if you include some uncommons and perhaps a rare or three in your deck, your opponent will have something to shoot for, and the game will be that much more exciting for both of you.

Only play people at your level. If you're new to the game or still just learning, playing a **Magic** veteran for ante is a lot like giving your cards away. After you purchase your first starter deck and a few boosters, play for ante against a friend who is also a beginner—you'll find that it can be fun *and* educational. It's amazing how quickly you pick up the rules when you've got your only Serra Angel on the line!

Always offer to trade back ante you've won. This is not only polite, but smart. You'll lose sometimes, too, and knowing you can get your ante back (even at a cost) can be very comforting. When you do offer to trade back, be sure you always offer a fair (or more than fair) trade.

Play for cards outside of your deck. Where does it say that ante has to come from your deck? (Aside from in the rules, of course.) Have each player ante an identical card from his or her collection, or maybe a booster pack.

Play in a closed environment. A **Magic** league provides one of the best environments for playing with ante. In fact, in many leagues success is measured by cards won and lost. Since your investment is preset at the beginning (often a starter deck and a booster or two), the potential for loss is automatically reduced. You're also guaranteed that your opponent is going to have a deck built roughly at your level. If you've never played this way, you'll be surprised at how you begin to value cards: anteing a Fireball will make you wince, but ante your Verduran Enchantress and you may well breathe a sigh of relief. In a closed environment, even winning basic land can be exciting.

Backgrounds by David Kimmel

REPARATIONS

by Richard Garfield

I recommend trying a variation on a standard, closed-environment league—we call it a reparations league. Each person starts with some set amount of cards (a deck, a booster, and some land for example), and players agree on a size for reparation stacks. In some of our leagues, we've set the size of the stack at five cards. Before duels, each player sets aside a stack of cards from her sideboard as a reparation stack. After the duel, the loser gets to pick a card at random from the winner's reparation stack to make up for the card lost in ante.

TEAM SEALED DECK

by Beth Moursund

Since the Duelists' Convocation added sealed-deck competitions to its tournaments, many players have tried this format and are starting to develop variations on it. One that's quite a lot of fun is a team version. Instead of entering as individuals, all players compete as members of teams. Team size is chosen and announced in advance so players can form teams and practice.

To run this variant, start each player with a sealed deck and one or two boosters, just like a standard sealed-deck event. But instead of building decks separately, the players of each team combine their cards and work together to build a deck of at least forty cards for each player. If the teams have at least three players each, then you don't need to add extra land—combining the decks should even out the land distribution. Allow a little longer for deck building than you would in a normal sealed-deck tournament so players will have time to negotiate (or argue).

You also need to decide whether to allow sideboards or not. If you allow them, keep each sideboard with its own deck and don't allow any swapping cards between decks after the duels begin—otherwise, the "color hosers" like Conversion and Karma will be very unbalancing.

Once the decks are built, run the event just like a standard round-robin or Swiss-format tournament except that two members of the same team can never play each other. Score one point for each win, and half a point for each tie. At the end, the team with the most accumulated victory points is the winner. Another variation is to play team vs. team instead, using Emperor Team rules.

FROM OUR READERS

Limit on X spells

The single most enjoyable house rule we use is that you may not target an opponent with X spells if he has creatures in play. This adds an exciting element to the game—you can be down to 1 or 2 life and be safe from blasting as long as you have creatures out. The rule also adds more strategy: you may have a Fireball, but first you need to clear out your opponent's defenses. Wrath of God followed by Fireball is perfectly acceptable to our group because it involves strategy. (Channel/Fireball doesn't involve strategy and is just boring.) The "no blasting" rule also tends to extend games, making them more enjoyable and more of a battle.

Mark Harding
<ccsmh@bath.ac.uk>

Power Pentacle

Some friends and I came up with this fun, five-player variant using ante. Each player chooses a different **Magic** color, and players arrange themselves around the table, by color, following the order found on the back of a **Magic** card (going clockwise: white, blue, black, red, and green).

You construct your deck using a minimum of sixty cards. Half of your deck is devoted to your primary color, including the land to support that color. The other half of your deck is split evenly between each "allied" color (the colors next to your primary color on the back of a **Magic** card; for example, green's allied colors are white and red). You can fill out the deck with land and artifacts, but your deck cannot contain more artifacts than cards for your primary color. (Decks also follow all other Duelists' Convocation rules, including the four-of-a-card rule and the Banned and Restricted lists.)

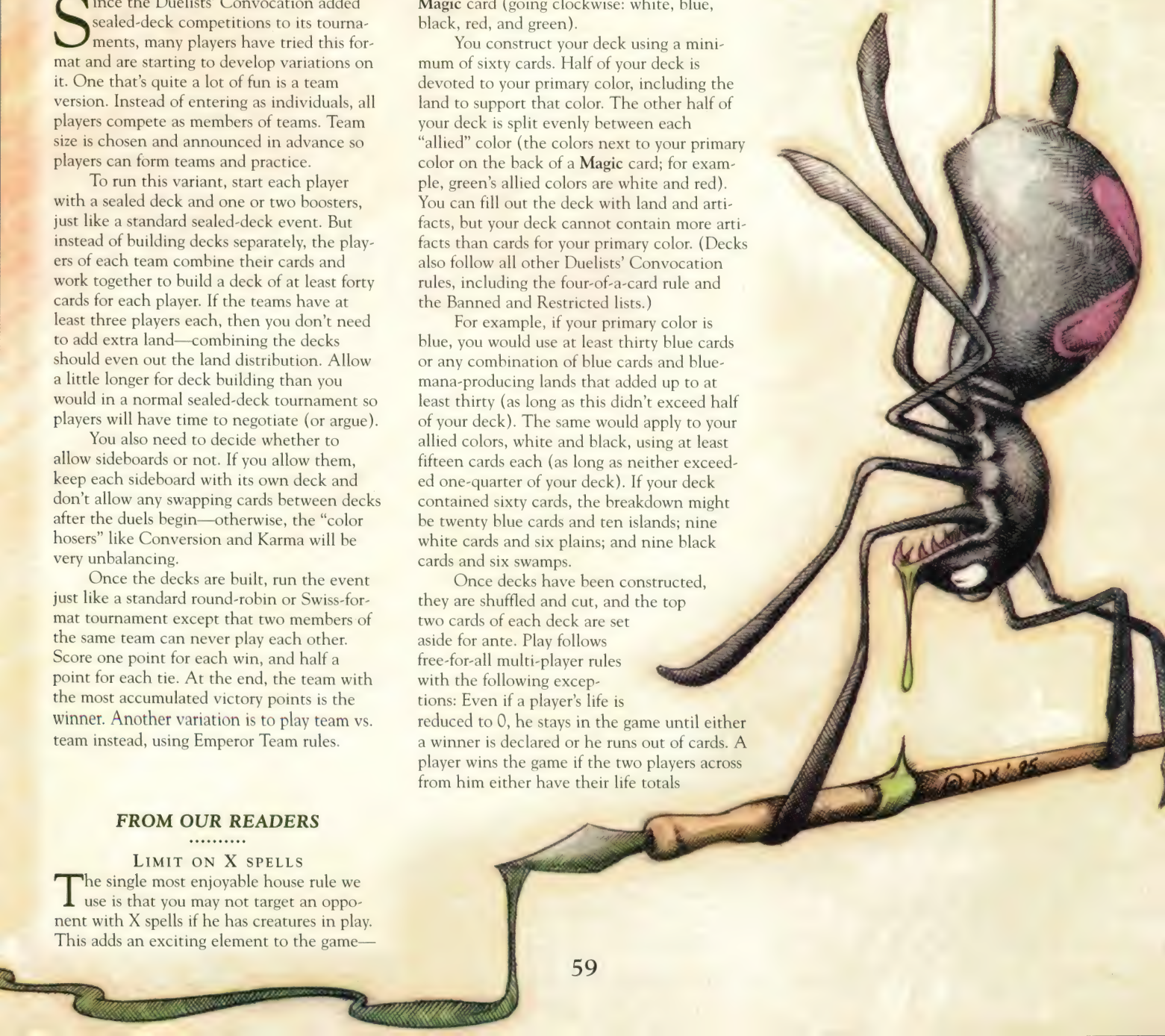
For example, if your primary color is blue, you would use at least thirty blue cards or any combination of blue cards and blue-mana-producing lands that added up to at least thirty (as long as this didn't exceed half of your deck). The same would apply to your allied colors, white and black, using at least fifteen cards each (as long as neither exceeded one-quarter of your deck). If your deck contained sixty cards, the breakdown might be twenty blue cards and ten islands; nine white cards and six plains; and nine black cards and six swamps.

Once decks have been constructed, they are shuffled and cut, and the top two cards of each deck are set aside for ante. Play follows free-for-all multi-player rules with the following exceptions: Even if a player's life is reduced to 0, he stays in the game until either a winner is declared or he runs out of cards. A player wins the game if the two players across from him either have their life totals reduced to 0 or they run out of cards. (Certain ante cards can also force a player out of the game.)

After a winner is declared, all players pass their decks (along with the cards anted from each deck) to the right. As soon as a player has won two games, that players wins the cards anted from the two decks across from him. The two decks adjacent to the winner keep their ante cards and each deck is returned to its original owner.

Randy Brown
<Razrbacker@aol.com>
(with help from Kevin Reidy)

If you have a fun and unique way of playing **Magic**, *send your idea to House Rules, c/o The Duelist, P.O. Box 707, Renton, WA 98057 or send e-mail to duelist@wizards.com.*



WotC Picks:
Chronicles

with contributions from Tom Fontaine, Bill Rose, Barry Reich, Hoi Nguyen, Charlie Catino, and Tom Wylie

When did you start playing ***Magic***™*? In the days of black-bordered Black Lotuses? Just after Legends™ came out? Before* **Fallen Empires**™*? Tens of thousands of people have been introduced to* ***Magic*** *since its release two years ago, but very few of them have played with, or in some cases even seen, all of the thousand-plus cards in the* ***Magic*** *universe. An attempt to put more of these out-of-print cards into the decks and collections of* ***Magic*** *players through Chronicles™ has excited a lot of interest. Here* ***Magic: The Gathering***™ *designers and playtesters share their picks for some of the best this new set has to offer.*

Nebuchadnezzar



At a casting cost of only 3 , Nebuchadnezzar is one of the least expensive legends. Although he's only a 3/3, his special ability can be formidable: X, : Name a card. Target opponent reveals X cards from his or her hand at random, discarding any of those which match the named card. If you've just used Boomerang or Unsummon, you'll have a good idea of which card to name for Nebuchadnezzar's effect. Even better, use Revelation or Zur's Weirding so that your opponent's hand is face up on the table, making it easy to know which card to name. If you use Clairvoyance or Glasses of Urza, your opponent won't see your hand when you see hers. Nebuchadnezzar also works well with cards like Instill Energy, Fyndhorn Brownie, or other cards that can untap him so you can force your opponent to discard twice in one turn.



Obelisk of Undoing and Stasis



Interested in seeing your opponent squirm in pain? Then this is the card combination for you! Obelisk of Undoing, an artifact that allows you to return a permanent you control to your hand, is a good alternative for most combinations that rely on Time Elemental. Substitute the Obelisk for Time Elemental in this classic combination: once you have Obelisk of Undoing in play, cast Stasis (players do not get an untap phase). Your opponent must skip his next untap phase due to the Stasis. At the end of his or her turn, tap the Obelisk and bring Stasis back into your hand. After your untap phase, cast Stasis again. Repeat ad nauseam.

Hell's Caretaker



How to make sacrificing a creature a lot less painful: Use Hell's Caretaker, a 1/1 creature you can tap to sacrifice a creature and place another creature from your graveyard directly into play. Enchant a creature with Puppet Master, sacrifice it to Hell's Caretaker to bring another creature out; Puppet Master then brings the creature from the graveyard to your hand to be summoned again during the main phase. Caretaker also works well with Tetravus, particularly if you have one Tetravus in play and one in the graveyard. Split the Tetravites off the Tetravus in play, then sacrifice a Tetravite to retrieve the Tetravus in the graveyard; the newly returned Tetravus will start with three counters. You can repeat the process next turn, or even that upkeep if you have another Caretaker in play or if you can untap the first one. This trick also works well in Reanimator decks: Sacrifice a Tetravite to retrieve your Lord of the Pit or Yawgmoth Demon; use the others to keep these big creatures fed.

Juxtapose

Coveting your opponent's Nicol Bolas? Wishing you hadn't summoned "Lord, it's a Pity"? Juxtapose is a sorcery which forces you and your opponent to exchange the creature and the artifact you control with the highest casting costs. Use Juxtapose to get rid of a creature whose cumulative upkeep is getting cumbersome, and tick your opponent off with a creature whose upkeep you know he or she can't pay, like Force of Nature; or give the opponent a creature that will die immediately—Nightmare to an opponent with no swamps, Sea Serpent to an opponent with no islands, etc. Another neat trick is to hand your opponent a Dance of Many token, and then get rid of Dance of Many, which removes the token from the game and spares you Dance of Many's upkeep. Gauntlets of Chaos lets you pull these tricks off with artifacts as well, especially with Ashnod's Transmogrant (see below) to turn a creature into an artifact creature.



Circles of Protection Revisited

Although CoPs are wonderful tools to shut down your opponent's attacks, several *Chronicles* cards just beg to be used with them. Use Cyclone (a green enchantment which deals damage equal to the number of wind counters on it to each player and creature), and protect yourself from the damage with Circle of Protection: Green. Or use CoP: Artifacts to protect yourself from a Voodoo Doll that gets out of control. (Voodoo Doll is an artifact which deals damage to an opponent equal to the number of pin counters on it, and deals that

Backgrounds by Amy Weber
Illustrations by Melissa Benson

much damage to you.) With the right Circles, you can avoid paying the upkeep costs of Yawgmoth Demon (sacrifice a creature during your upkeep or Demon deals 2 damage to you) or Primordial Ooze (gains a +1/+1 counter during each of your upkeeps; pay X (number of counters) at end of upkeep or Ooze deals X damage to you); and if you add Jandor's Saddlebags or the like, you can untap them so they'll be available to attack. In the case of Primordial Ooze, you can also leave it available to block if you untap it after your attack.

Protection from Red



If you want to take this theme a little further, you can build a deck that uses Beasts of Bogardan, Ivory Guardians, and Repentant Blacksmiths, three creatures in *Chronicles* that have protection from red. You might also include some Indestructible Auras and Red Wards to give your other creatures protection from red. Add Circle of Protection: Red, and you can use the abilities of Brothers of Fire and Orcish Artillery without fear. Wipe out opposing creatures with effects like Earthquake, Pyroclasm, and Inferno, and CoP out of the damage while your creatures ignore the damage. Blood of the Martyr is another useful addition to this deck; it lets you redirect damage from Inferno to yourself, and then either prevent the damage with your CoP: Red, or Reverse Damage all of the damage from a source. Finally, add a few copies of Chaoslace to protect your creatures from spells or effects of other colors.

Ashnod's Altar and Howl from Beyond



Weenie decks typically start strong, but then get outclassed by the opponent's larger creatures; this combination helps give these decks some "oomph" in the end game, and works well in almost any weenie deck. Cheap to cast, Ashnod's Altar is an artifact to which you can sacrifice a creature to add two colorless mana to your mana pool. When your game slows down because your opponent is bringing out the big creatures, play defensively until you can build a large horde of your little creatures, then attack en masse. Sacrifice all your creatures but one your opponent doesn't block to Ashnod's Altar, then put all the mana into a Howl from Beyond which you cast on the unblocked creature. Just make sure you leave a swamp untapped for the Howl!

Ashnod's Transmogrant

The double ability of Ashnod's Transmogrant makes it one of the most versatile cards to appear in *Chronicles*. The ability to give a +1/+1 counter to a creature as an instant is pretty good in itself; it forces your opponent to carefully consider every attack or defense. But Ashnod's Transmogrant also turns a creature into an artifact creature, thus making that creature immune to spells like Terror or Fear/Seeker, but vulnerable to spells or cards that affect artifacts. Use Scavenger Folk to destroy the now-artifact creature, or Detonate to bury the creature and deal damage to your opponent. Or use Aladdin to take control of a creature you've Transmogrified.



Transmutation



Ever been frustrated by your opponent's annoyingly tough, low-power creatures? With Transmutation, you can get around those creatures by transposing their power and toughness. Get rid of all those 0/huge walls by casting Transmutation on them, or use Sorceress Queen on a creature to make it 0/2 and then use Transmutation to make it 2/0. Or use Transmutation to set up any lower power/high toughness creature to be killed by Lightning Bolt. You can also use Transmutation to make the most of your creatures. Use Living Armor on an Orgg and then Transmute it to get an 11/6 trampling creature for the turn. For an added surprise, cast Living Armor on an attacker with first strike, wait for blocking to be declared, and then cast Transmutation on your attacker, which kills the now-outpowered blocker. This trick works equally well on defense.

The Wretched and Lure

Like the classic Basilisk-Lure combination, this duo makes blocking your attack necessary and unpleasant for your opponent. The Wretched allows you to take control of any creature blocking it; Lure, or other weird effects like Melee, can be used to force your opponent's creatures to block. This works even better when you cast Regeneration on The Wretched, or attack with The Wretched and a creature with banding. (Using Helm of Chatzuk to band together a Lured Wretched with a Craw Giant is pretty rude!) To make it worse, add Titania's Song, Kormus Bell, or Xenic Poltergeist to give The Wretched more things to block and you to control.



Rabid Wombat



A popular addition to decks which use a lot of enchantments, Rabid Wombat gets +2/+2 for every creature enchantment on it. Enchant it with Fishliver Oil, Fear, Seeker, etc. to make the Wombat difficult to block while increasing the damage it deals. Put Krovikan Fetish on the Wombat to give the Wombat +3/+3 and yourself an extra card next upkeep. Or add a Verduran Enchantress to draw a card every time you fortify your Wombat. This creature combines nicely with Enchantment Alteration: If a Wombat attacks and is blocked by a creature with Giant Strength, for example, you can use Enchantment Alteration to move the Giant Strength to the Wombat, giving it an effective +6/+6 advantage over the other creature. Also, Immolation is a remarkable deal, giving +4/+0 for one red mana. You can also take advantage of the fact Rabid Wombat doesn't tap when attacking; if you can't find another target for Spirit Shackle, use it to give Wombat +2/+2 with little danger of acquiring any -0/-2 counters.



by Rhias K. Hall

The Duelists' Convocation

Since the beginning of time, people have used rating systems to determine how good they were at various things. In caveman times they used the "not dead yet" system, in which the longer a hunter survived the better his ratings became, until he died, in which case they tended to drop dramatically.

As time progressed, a less dangerous system was developed in which people could test their skills against other people and survive to gloat about the experience. For instance, if Grog and Bash wanted to find out who was the better hunter, they would challenge each other. The next morning, both hunters would go hunting, and the one who killed the larger buffalo would be considered the better hunter.

With the discovery of agriculture, games became a more popular pastime and more rating systems came into existence. Some systems only rated players on games won—so any player able to devote time to gaming was automatically rated higher than any player who actually had a life. So if Amenchutzpah spent all of his time gaming and Tutancamel spent most of his time building pyramids, Amenchutzpah would have a much higher rating at their favorite game (pin the animal head on the deity) even if Tutancamel was much better and defeated Amenchutzpah whenever they played.

During the Renaissance, someone came up with the idea of rating a player based on performance against others. Using this system, both Georgio and Marco would play several games of rat hockey and if Marco won consistently, other players who thought they were pretty good would come and play against him. If Marco continued to defeat better players, his ratings would increase—and if those players defeated Marco, then *their* ratings would increase because by this time Marco was getting to be a pretty famous rat hockey star. This rating system seemed to work well until the time of the black plague, when the popularity of rat hockey waned severely—along with many of the sport's most adamant fans.

Which brings us to the present. One of the Duelists' Convocation's goals is to provide players of **Deckmaster™** games with a way of knowing just how good they are compared to other players around the world. Until May 1, 1995, we used a points-based system in which players accumulated points based on how well they did in tournament play. There were quite a few flaws in this system. For instance, some areas had more tournaments than others, giving members living in those areas far more opportunity to earn points. People in Los Angeles, for instance, were constantly scoring more points than people who lived in Kansas—regardless of the respective skills of the players involved.

We tried to keep this under control by only allowing one sanctioned tournament (any tournament in which DC members could be awarded points) in any given region each month. This only worked if players only played in events in their regions; however, many of our members enjoyed commuting to other areas to play, and this tended to skew the ratings in the favor of players with time and money to travel. The DC has always taken steps to try to make sure that members aren't penalized for not spending huge amounts of cash on the games they enjoy.

After much discussion on how best to alleviate the aforementioned difficulties, we looked at rating systems used by other organizations such as the RPGA, the Contract Bridge Association, and the U.S. Chess Federation. We decided to use the Chess Federation's system for several reasons. First, this system rates players against other players on the basis of skill—as determined by win/loss ratios taking into account opponents' ratings. The more a player competes, the more accurate his rating becomes. Since we now want to encourage as many sanctioned events as possible, we are able to lift the one-event-per-month restriction. In addition, players can now compete wherever and whenever they like without gaining any ratings advantage over those players who prefer to compete in their own regions.

So now you know a little bit about ratings systems, what they do, and why we use them. We have come a long time since the days of Grog and Bash, but one thing will never change: The spirit of competition is still strong.

COMING SOON

It's WotC's "Road to the World Title" pamphlet! This booklet profiles the players competing in the 1995 **Magic** World Championship Aug. 5–6. Produced as a joint effort by *The Duelist* magazine, *Duelist Companion*, and *Retailer Direct*, this exciting booklet will be available from your local retailer in late July.

RESTRICTION UPDATE

The current tournament rules have been adjusted to include two additions to the Banned and Restricted List for Type II tournament play. Balance has been added to the Restricted list and Fork has been added to the Banned List.

The Duelists' Convocation

WotC's Official Deckmaster Games Organization

This year's World Championship will be bringing teams from twenty nations to compete for the title of **Magic: The Gathering** *world champion. Take your place among the masters next year by joining the Duelists' Convocation now! Start building your rankings in sanctioned competition and you might get the chance to represent your country in the 1996 world championships!*

Convocation members pair off against other members in officially sanctioned tournaments to test their skill and to earn ratings that qualify them to compete for regional, national, and international recognition. The Duelists' Convocation's rating system provides members with an accurate measure of their skill based on their win/loss ratio against other rated players.

The Convocation also maintains and publishes Wizards of the Coast's official tournament rules, which assure that a fair playing field is always maintained and that players who have been playing longer or who have spent more money on their decks do not have an unfair advantage over those who have only just discovered the game.

Members will also receive a year's subscription to The Duelist *—the cutting-edge magazine of the trading card game industry—and a year's subscription to the Convocation's newsletter. This monthly newsletter features rules updates, strategy tips, up-to-the-minute information on sanctioned tournaments, and insider information not available elsewhere.*

Backgrounds by Richard Kane Ferguson

by Mark Rosewater

The Ice Age Sealed Deck Tournament

It seems like an eternity ago, but I remember the day I opened my very first **Magic** starter deck. About six or seven cards into the pack, I found my first Thicket Basilisk. All I can remember about that moment is that I thought it was the coolest thing I'd ever seen.

Later that day, when I brought it into play for the first time, I remember my opponent picking it up, reading it, and just letting his jaw drop. It was great! Here I was, a mysterious wizard from another plane, summoning magical beasts that my opponent had never imagined.

Cut to almost two years later. While perusing the Internet, I came across a post about an *Ice Age* sealed-deck tournament in Toronto. What caught my eye was that the date of the event (June 3–4) was a week before *Ice Age* was scheduled for release, meaning that hundreds of players would be dueling with cards they'd never seen before. I remembered that first Thicket Basilisk, and the next thing I knew, I was at the Canadian Comic and Card Spectacular waiting in line to register.

Over 650 **Magic** players came from across North America to be the first to peel open an *Ice Age* booster pack. We were a bit rowdy (everything from banging tables and chanting to doing the "wave"), but we were definitely ready to play.

When the word finally came to open up our cards, I imagine people all over Toronto were wondering what the loud cheer was. Given an *Ice Age* starter deck and one booster pack (plus five additional basic lands), we were then allowed to make a deck of forty cards minimum. This took awhile, as people had to not only read all their cards, but had to stop to check out what the latest "Wow, I don't believe it!" was all about.

Eventually, everyone had a deck and the dueling began. All games had to be played for ante, so the tournament had an extra edge as people hoped to win one of the cool cards they had heard rumors about while holding onto their own nasty cards that they had planned to take home and show off to their friends.

Added to the excitement of the games were several new concepts unique to *Ice Age*. Basic lands came both plain and snow-covered. These became important as the abilities of certain cards depended on the number and existence of snow-covered lands. Also, some permanents came with a "cumulative upkeep" cost that grew the longer the card stayed in play. And still other cards replaced themselves by allowing their caster to draw a card during the next upkeep.

The first few rounds went slowly as players learned just what exactly their new *Ice Age* cards were capable of doing. More than once I cast a spell only to hear my opponent say, "You can do that? Really? Let me see that card. Cool!" (As it was a single-elimination tournament, players who lost a match had to move to a second consolation tournament.)

More than once during the tournament, I would get two cards in my hand and realize at that moment how the two cards worked together. I think half the time when players made excellent use of card combinations, they were as shocked by it as their opponent.

As it turned out, I was lucky and got a card in my pack that I considered my secret weapon. It was an artifact called a Vexing Arcanix that allowed me to force my opponent to guess the card on top of his library. If correct, he was allowed to put the card in his hand, but if he was incorrect, he put the card in his graveyard and took 2 points of damage. This is a rather powerful card by itself, but when put in a situation where people don't know the names of the cards they are playing with, it was downright brutal.

In most of my early games, I would get my Arcanix out and watch my foe search their memory for the name of the card they hoped was on top of their library.

As I faced other opponents, I quickly learned that every player had a secret weapon (and in this tournament, I do mean secret). I had cards removed from my library (Jester's Cap), had my hand completely replaced by my opponent (Jester's Mask), and had all my land tapped to produce other colors of mana (Naked Singularity).

What had started with over 600 players was whittled little by little down to thirty-two players by day's end. The decks were collected and the finalists were allowed a night of sleep before they duked it out in the very first *Ice Age* sealed-deck championship.

In the end, the title went to Dave Humphreys, 22, a graduate student at M.I.T. who had traveled from Boston, MA to take part in what he referred to as part of "**Magic** history." With "more close calls than [he] likes to remember," Dave won the finals in the third game of a very dramatic match (against finalist Terry Borer) with a mere three cards left in his library.

At a special awards ceremony, all four finalists were presented with prizes including special diamond-studded *Ice Age* medallions. Dave best summed up the feelings of most the players when asked what he'd do after the tournament: "Play more *Ice Age*, of course.

To join the Convocation, send this membership application (or if you don't want to cut up your magazine, feel free to send a photocopy), along with a check for $18 U.S. to:

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Lost in the Shuffle

by Richard Garfield

Recently, I was sent a description of a **Magic**™ tournament deck which was prefaced by this comment: "If *Fallen Empires*™ is any indication of what *Ice Age*™ is like, this will be my deck for Origins." This was shocking to me—a player writing off over 400 cards for his tournament purposes. For this to happen, there must be something wrong with these expansions or with the **Magic** tournament system.

So are the expansions at fault, or is the tournament system? There is no doubt in my mind that it is the tournament system. *Fallen Empires* is a brilliant expansion. It is more interesting, subtle, bizarre, and thematically coherent than any preceding expansion. It's a blast in a limited environment. I remember playing at a convention where each player used a starter deck, a *Revised*™ booster, and a few FE boosters. The people from Wizards of the Coast creamed the best tournament players there because the tournament players had completely removed *Fallen Empires* from consideration. Yet these cards have no place in our tournaments? That is ridiculous!

The Type I tournament style of play has poisoned people's brains. Here are some of the myths that surround Type I tournaments:

- **There are more interesting cards in Type I tournaments.** Timewalk is more interesting than Thorn Thallid? Ancestral Recall is more interesting than Sandstorm? I don't think so. People often mistake the availability of a card in Type I for its real contribution to the environment. While the variety of cards available in Type I tourneys is large, the variety of cards actually used in other tournament forms is staggering. The hotshot Type I player may claim that "I can work *any* card into a winning deck," but those decks seem contrived, the cards in question more of a burden than a help.

- **There is more excitement in Type I tournaments.** The play I've seen in other tournament forms is just as involved and interesting as what I've observed in Type I tournaments. I don't consider Power Sinking your own Balance unsuccessfully in order to force your opponent to discard an extra card to be any more clever than using your Prodigal Sorcerer to kill itself to get rid of your opponent's Pestilence.

- **There is more skill in Type I tournaments.** The skill only seems greater because it is a kind of skill that players are used to. I've observed that some really good Type I tournament players tend to be rather average performers in other kinds of tournaments, and they then reject the other forms as being based more on luck than on skill. These tournament forms do require skill, but skill that these players have not yet learned. Usually, if they stick with that tournament form, they rise to the top once again—and lo and behold, suddenly the tournament form requires skill after all!

The Evolution of Magic Tournaments

I have been asked by many people what I think about the two new tournament forms which the Duelists' Convocation is now sanctioning. I think it is a great start! I have been playing **Magic** tournaments and leagues of all descriptions for several years now, and I think having a variety of tournament forms is more important than having a particular tournament form be perfect. Advocating variety is a theme in my life that was influential in the development of **Magic** itself. **Magic** was born out of the desire to fit more variety into a game than could be fit in a box. In choosing the cards for the game, I kept many cards that some playtesters hated because some people loved them. In choosing the art, I encouraged the inclusion of some styles that would be frequently disliked, but that others would love—not that the original art director for **Magic,** Jesper Myrfors, needed encouragement along those lines! Similarly, I would rather have six tournament forms, three of which I loved and three of which I hated, than one that everyone was merely satisfied with.

This is not to say that Type I tournaments don't have their place—they do. They have played an extremely important role in developing the game. The very first **Magic** tournaments had no restrictions at all. Use whatever cards you can get, and as many of them as you want! This was natural at the time, but it quickly became apparent that, in order to keep the game fun, we needed to set some limits on deck construction. The first Duelists' Convocation tournament form (what we now call Type I) was created from this need. The plan was to restrict the cards that made the environment less fun because players badly abused them. As we got better at designing expansions, fewer and fewer cards would need to be restricted. It was a good plan—for a little while.

So what happened? First of all, we decided to cut the restricted cards out of the card mix because they were in some way or another "broken" cards, and not really good for the game. This made them seem vital to compete with, yet hard to get—not a good situation if you want to encourage new players to participate.

Backgrounds by Doug Keith

We also found that it was hard to make expansions with no restricted cards, and in doing so the expansions were becoming less and less useful from a tournament player's point of view. Building Type I tournament decks was becoming more and more a matter of simply picking through an expansion for a few cards to help the already existing decks.

This is why the Duelists' Convocation decided to add the two new forms, Type II and Sealed-Deck tournaments, to its system of sanctioned events. After all, do we really want a tournament system for **Magic** in which players actively shut out new additions to the environment? To me, the fun of a tournament lies in pitting yourself against new players and new decks, not against twists on the same old themes.

The New Tournament Forms

I am on the edge of my seat with interest to see what will emerge in a tournament system like Type II in which only currently published cards and the last two expansions are made available. Tournament players will have to explore the intricacies of each new expansion, because the play environment is being affected in a real way, not just by a new card or two in their sideboards.

The sealed-deck tournaments are often viewed as an affair of luck compared to Type I tournaments. Through a relentless series of sealed-deck leagues that I held at Wizards of the Coast last year, I have learned that the best players consistently end up on top. I love sealed-deck competitions and am delighted to see them sanctioned. There is a lot to deciding which forty of your seventy cards you are going to play with, and quite possibly more skill in the actual play of the game than in any other tournament type.

I don't mean to minimize the skill in Type I tournaments. The players who are pushing the envelope in this arena are some of the canniest game players I have ever met. They have mastered a component of a challenging game in a challenging environment. But as I see it, it is just one component of the game. Learning how to play in a tournament with a new set of restrictions, or how to draft a decent deck, or how to turn a starter deck into the best fighting machine are all equally valid aspects of **Magic**. If Type I players turned their energies toward these aspects, I am sure they will find that the new tournament forms offer as many avenues to exercise their talents as they could ever hope.

The Advent of Ice Age

Ice Age™ is the first stand-alone expansion for **Magic** and it provides a lot of opportunity for interesting tournaments. In fact, it was designed with limited environments in mind. We just kicked off *Ice Age* with a sealed-deck tournament in Toronto, just days before the game's release. Players received a deck, booster, and five land, and had seventy-five minutes to assemble a deck. Each player had to think on his or her feet and readjust strategies on the fly—there was little time to copy an opponent's strategy, because if it was a good strategy, you were dead. Adapt or die!

The tournament was a blast to watch, the players groaning at being subjected to a radically new card or the discovery that there was a common 3/3 swampwalker. There was the usual negative reaction from some people about the amount of luck in the tournament; one player was waving a deck that could easily have taken anyone to the finals, complaining that he had been dealt garbage and claiming that "it is all the luck of the deal, any idiot can strip a deck!" But most players had very positive reactions, and said that they hadn't been so excited opening a deck of cards since the first decks of **Magic**.

Now we will have a year of *Ice Age* tournaments. *Ice Age* cards will appear in other tournaments as well, since the card set is a part of **Magic: The Gathering**. But I suspect the popularity of *Ice Age*-only tournaments is going to reflect the fact that a more restricted environment can paradoxically lead to more interesting and varied play. I hope to see a new stand-alone **Magic** expansion every year for players to explore.

The Future of Tournaments

There are plenty of other tournament types I would like to see sanctioned. Bridge has many more officially-recognized tournaments than **Magic: The Gathering** does now. I would like to see **Magic** have ten times as many officially recognized tournaments than bridge.

But with numerous tournament forms, how do you determine who the best **Magic** players are? It seems clear that there have to be separate families of tournaments which are loosely connected under the **Magic** umbrella. The skills involved in a sealed-deck competition are so different from those involved in a "construct a deck" tournament that they warrant different world championships. The tournaments could be divided into broad "families," with a representative tournament in each class serving as the world championship. Each tournament within the family offers players a way to earn points towards their standings within that family.

For those of us interested in **Magic** tournaments, there are other hurdles to jump: how to equalize land distribution in sealed-deck environment, for example, or how to time a match justly. I was once knocked out of a tournament after my opponent cast a two-point Stream of Life when time ran out rather than discarding, and the winner was decided by who had the most life! Blech! But maybe this is another element that lends variety to the game, one of those things which most of us hate, but some of us love.

Bringing Visions To Life:

Creating a Character in the

EVERWAY

GAME

by John Tynes

Have you ever wanted to be someone else?
Have you ever dreamed away a long summer afternoon with stories of adventure, fantasy, and romance in which you were the star?
In WotC's new roleplaying game, EVERWAY, you can do this and much more—and in this issue of The Duelist, you can get started.

EVERWAY is Wizards of the Coast's first new roleplaying game in several years. Designed by **Ars Magica**'s™ creator, Jonathan Tweet, EVERWAY combines traditional fantasy roleplaying with fantasy art trading cards similar to **Magic: The Gathering**™ (and in fact, many **Magic** artists are also doing work for EVERWAY). Unlike **Magic**, though, EVERWAY cards don't have rules on them, just artwork—and often, questions evoked by the image on the card. Players use the artwork and these questions to inspire ideas about characters, worlds, stories, and other elements which are then used in the play of the game.

The four pictures shown here are "vision cards," just a few of the ninety different fantasy art cards that are used with EVERWAY. (Sample vision cards are included in this issue of *The Duelist*.) With these cards, you create characters, stories, worlds, or whatever else comes to mind. How does it work? Here's an example. I'm going to create an EVERWAY hero—the character I would play in an EVERWAY game.

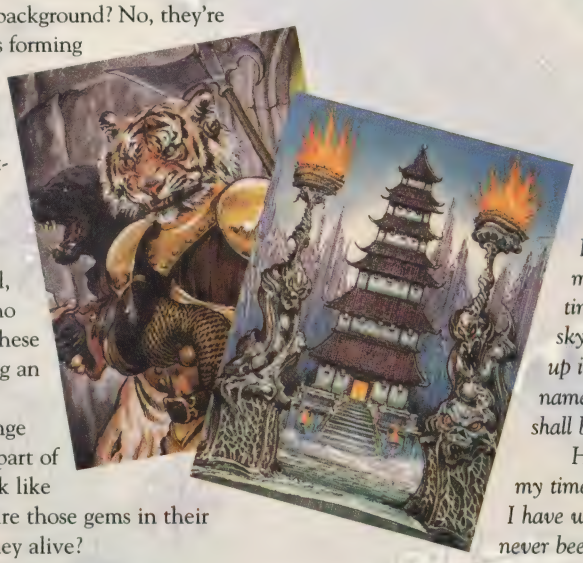
Let's jump right in. Imagine that you're at a table with ninety vision cards spread out, and you've picked these four to create your character with. Why these? Maybe they just caught your eye, or maybe they reminded you of something. I picked them for various reasons, and they spark various ideas in my mind which are described below.

Vision Card One: a green guy holding a book. He looks sort of creepy and weird. Are those spirits in the background? No, they're candles. Hmm. Maybe the candle smoke is forming apparitions of the dead?

Vision Card Two: three cat-people in armor. I like cats, and this one just caught my eye. What kind of a place do these cat-people live in, and why do they look like they're preparing for battle?

Vision Card Three: children wearing strange hats. It looks like they're in school, and there's an adult in the background who appears to be casting a spell. But what if these children are the rulers of a nation debating an important decision?

Vision Card Four: a pagoda with strange statues in front. Pagodas are traditionally part of Japanese culture, but the statues don't look like any Asian architecture I've seen before. Are those gems in their eyes, or are their eyes just glowing? Are they alive?



Those were my first thoughts when I looked at each card. What were yours?

Having given these four vision cards the once-over, I need to think about how they fit together. First, is my character one of the people in these pictures? I just looked at them again, and realized that I identify pretty strongly with the tiger-man. Okay, that'll be my character, or hero.

Was I always this way? Are my people all tiger-people? The others in the vision card look like panthers, or maybe even bears of some sort. Somehow they look more appropriate standing up; my tiger-man seems out of place in his armor, and he certainly doesn't look very happy.

Before I continue, I want to choose a name. Names in EVERWAY aren't made-up words like Ragnor or Blorkon. They're real words with real meanings, like Opal, or Spring, or Shadowstone. What should my tiger-man's name be?

"**Blaze**."

Suddenly, all the pieces fall into place. Here's my new EVERWAY hero, in his own words, which I made up as I wrote this.

I was born in the river village of Swan Fork, on the day of the summer solstice. My mother went into labor before dawn, and by the time of my birth the sun was hot and high in the sky. My father held me in his arms and squinted up into the light, then looked down and said, "His name is Blaze, for he is born under the sun and shall burn twice as bright!"

He wasn't mistaken. I have burned brightly in my time, but my fire has exacted a high price; though I have walked the worlds and seen many things, I have never been satisfied.

Backgrounds and symbols by Amy Weber
Illustrations by Martin McKenna and Ian Miller

(Look at Vision Card Three to see how I work it into my hero's history.)

As a child, I was not as you see me now. I was human, and I played with the other children of Swan Fork. As a learned man, my father took it upon himself to teach us about the worlds over the horizon and beyond. He was a conjurer of some small gifts: from him I learned a few trifling magics, though I am no wizard. Also from him I learned to fear the night as a time of skulkers and blackguards.

(Now I've turned that vision card into a scene from my hero's childhood. If you had chosen that card for your hero, you could have made it mean something completely different.)

By the summer of my fourteenth year, I was itching to leave. Swan Fork offered nothing besides a life of drudgery and crop-rearing, and I wanted more. I arose at dawn on my birthday, the solstice, and walked out of the village with only a pouch of food and a knife.

This was my first mistake. I left too young, with more confidence in myself than my abilities warranted.

(Next I work Vision Card Four into my hero's story.)

I lived by my wits for many months, traveling where my feet took me and meeting many folk. Eventually I heard tales of a powerful mage who could speak with the spirits of the dead and wrest favors and power from them. I yearned to command them, too, and I sought out his tower. He stood at the gate as I approached, having foreseen my arrival. He became my master, and I his student.

This mage's name was Taker, and he was far stronger a sorcerer than my father had ever been. I chafed under the demands he placed on me: he was not a young man, and so he had me do his chores. When I failed in some task, he would berate me and even beat me, so that the fires of resentment burned in my body. One morning after a few months of this, I slipped into his room while he slept, and cut his throat.

This was my second mistake. I should have left, rather than slain my master. In truth, I was more jealous of his power than resentful of my treatment. Killing him was wrong.

(Here's where Vision Card One comes in.)

I fled from Taker's room and grabbed his book of spells from his sanctum, but as I turned to go, he appeared before me. He was not flesh and bone, but a form of mist and candle-smoke. Taker had power over the spirits of the dead, and now that he was one of them, he was more powerful still.

His apparition seized the book from my grasp and glared at me. I opened my mouth, perhaps to utter some curse or to plead for my miserable life, but it was of no use.

He killed me.

My lifeless body dropped to the floor. But that was not the end of Taker's revenge. As I died, he seized my spirit and whirled it about. I saw colors and flashing lights, and for a moment I thought I saw the sun. But then everything went dark; dark, the color of night.

When next I opened my eyes, I was as you see me now: a furred beast that walks on two legs. Taker had forced my spirit into the body of another, who had died moments before. I was reborn, in this alien form, into a world far from the one I knew. I raved and swore, and almost killed myself to be rid of this terrible curse. But then I looked into the bright sun shining above, and the anger left me. If I was a beast, it was my mistakes that brought me to this point. I would not give up my life once and for all without a fight.

(Finally, Vision Card Two comes into the story.)

My new life went well. I lived in a land known as Yellowhome, populated by many forms of cat-people like myself. I was a mighty warrior, and in the space of a few short years I became their leader. But the role I seized by force soon seized me, and I learned the first of my new lessons: the strongest fighter is not always the best of rulers. I made decisions rashly, letting my sword cleave an answer where my wisdom could not.

As the troubles of my people mounted, I realized I was not fit to rule, for might equals justice only when tempered with wisdom. I stepped down and named another, wiser of my folk to lead us. Her I served gladly and fiercely, and under her guidance our people prospered. I championed her warriors and led them in great battles against our foes, battles of which legends were spun.

Recently I have left the cat-people. I was one of them, yet I was not, and there is still much in the worlds I would see before I die. Perhaps I will face Taker once again. Much as when I left Swan Fork, I walked out of the cat-people village with little more than the clothes on my back and the sword at my side. But I am no longer the child who left too soon; like the phoenix, I have died and been reborn.

It has been twelve years since my second mistake, twelve years in which I have grown and truly become an adult. I have learned to embrace the night, when my vision is strongest. My anger may yet get the best of me, but whether I be human or cat-man I shall always be Blaze, and I shall always burn bright. May the gods grant that my fire be stoked with caution, lest I be consumed by the flames.

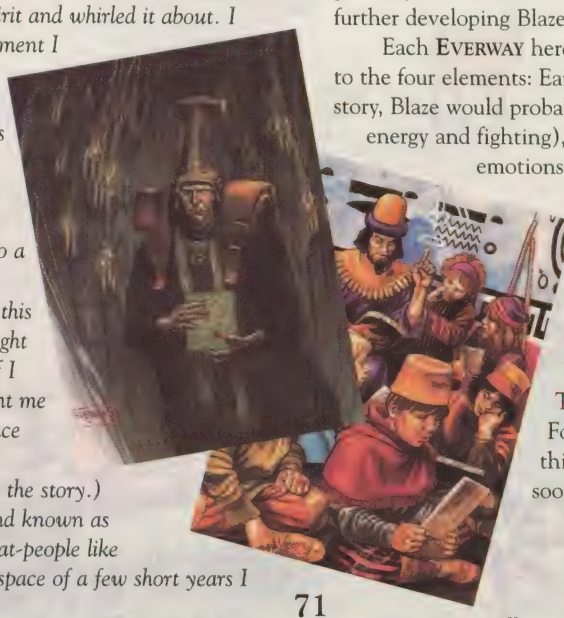


Well, there's my character's story. As you can see, some elements of the cards became very important, while others I ignored. I didn't do anything with the weird gate in front of the wizard's tower, for instance, and some of the thoughts I had about the children weren't used. But I did incorporate my ideas about the candles being spirits of the dead, and the tiger-man not always appearing as he now does.

Usually you will be part of a group of players creating **EVERWAY** heroes at the same time. At some point, you all stop to show each other the cards you've chosen and to ask each other questions. For example, a fellow player might have asked me, "Was Taker the first person you ever killed?" I'd have to think of an answer on the spot, further developing Blaze's history and personality.

Each **EVERWAY** hero is governed by four attributes, corresponding to the four elements: Earth, Air, Fire, and Water. Judging from his story, Blaze would probably have a high score in Fire (which relates to energy and fighting), and a pretty good score in Water (governing emotions and wisdom) though the latter was probably low until the last few years in his life. His Fate card—a symbolic force in his life—would probably be The Phoenix, which can mean either rebirth or destruction.

Blaze has many adventures before him as he traverses the infinite spheres. Will he learn to control his rashness? Will he ever face Taker again? Might he ever return to Swan Fork, or to the cat-people? There are many things that I'll explore as I play **EVERWAY**—and soon you may, too.



Illustrations by Andrew Robinson and Roger Raupp


WHAT'S NEW
©Pfoglio C-95
HEY, DON'T JUST STAND THERE, SHUT THE DOOR AND THROW ANOTHER BOX OF CARDS ON THE FIRE. DON'CHA KNOW THERE'S AN ICE AGE GOING ON?
HEY, KIDS!
AN ICE AGE IS A PERIOD WHEN THE EARTH COOLS DOWN FOR AN EXTENDED LENGTH OF TIME. THIS RESULTS IN THINGS LIKE GLACIERS RUMBLING DOWN FROM THE POLES AND COVERING MOST OF THE PLANET. SCIENCE STILL DOESN'T KNOW WHAT CAUSES AN ICE AGE, THOUGH THE W.O.T.C. MARKETING DEPARTMENT IS SUSPECTED.
HEY! AN AGE OF ICE! THAT WOULD BE SO... COOL! GET IT?
OUR AD CAMPAIGN: BUY MAGIC- IT'S NEAT!
RIGHT. SO- HOW WILL THIS INCREDIBLE CLIMATIC CHANGE AFFECT THE DIVERSE INHABITANTS OF DOMINIA?
WE'RE COLD, YOU BLOCKHEAD!
"WE'RE COLD, YOU BLOCKHEAD"?
I KNOW! I KNOW!! THERE'S JUST NOTHING FUNNY ABOUT AN ICE AGE, OKAY?!
THE BACK OF THE OLD DRAWING BOARD
WHAT?
DID MY EARS DECEIVE ME?
PHIL, THERE'S A MAMMOTH IN THE HOUSE.
OH, GOOD. I THOUGHT I WAS HALLUCINATING AGAIN.
ART
NOTHING FUNNY ABOUT AN ICE AGE?! HA! LISTEN TO THIS-
WHAT THE ?
LOOK UPON THAT FIELD OF ICE, AIN'T IT SMOOTH? AIN'T IT NICE? IT MAKES YOU WANT TO RUN SO FAST AND FLEET-
HONK! HONK!
G-DUNGEG-DUNGEG-DUNGE
BUT AS THAT FIELD OF ICE YOU CROSS, SUDDENLY A LARGE CREVASSE OPENS IN THE GROUND BENEATH YOUR FEET!


SO TEN THOUSAND YEARS FROM NOW, THE GUY WHO DRIVES THE BIG SNOW-PLOUGH, RUNS INTO A TON OF MAMMOTH MEAT!
WHAT THE...?
CLUNK!
IT'S STILL FROZE BUT HE CAN'T EAT IT, DO YOU STIR-FRY, SMOKE OR HEAT IT? IF YOU COOK IT WRONG IT WON'T TASTE SWEET.
NO...NO... DANG, IT'S NOT IN HERE, EITHER.
COOK IT!
SO-
BECAUSE THOSE FOOLS IN TEN THOU B.C. COULD NOT WRITE DOWN THE RECIPE ALL THEIR MAMMOTH COOKWARE'S OBSOLETE!
HEY, BUDDY, IS THAT YOUR @!!*+ DEAD MAMMOTH?
MAMMOTH COOKING UTENSILS
METHOD OF USAGE: UNKNOWN
NOW YOU TELL ME THAT THAT'S NOT FUNNY! I'LL BET YOU CAN'T, FOR LOVE OR MONEY, 'CAUSE THOSE OLD MAMMOTH JOKES JUST CAN'T BE BEAT!
YEAH!!
CRUNCH!
OKAY... SURREALISM IS GOOD.
TELL THEM IT'S 'ART.
'ART?!' HEY, DOES THIS MEAN I DON'T GET PAID?!
END

ARTIST ANNOUNCEMENTS

Many ***Deckmaster***™ *fans wish to contact the artists who created the artwork on their favorite cards. Look no further! Here, many of our artists have provided their contact addresses, dates and locations of convention appearances, as well as listings of original artwork and prints for sale. Some artists are happy to autograph cards, too. Package your cards carefully so they won't get bent, include a self-addressed, stamped envelope, and send them to the artist's contact address. Please limit the number of cards to a reasonable number (no suitcases, please!). Artists are not responsible for lost or damaged cards.*

Art For Sale

Art used in **Magic: The Gathering**™ and other Wizards of the Coast products is available for purchase. To buy original artwork or prints from the artists listed below, contact them at the addresses listed here. Please be aware that the prices of original artwork range from $90 to $2,000, with an average price of about $550. Print prices range from $5 to $80, with average prices around $25. Please make your check payable to the artist (not to Wizards of the Coast) and send it to the contact address below.

If you wish to purchase artwork by an artist not listed here, request an Artwork Availability List and Artist Contact Sheet. These list the originals and prints available, along with the artists' contact addresses. Send your request and a self-addressed, stamped, letter-sized envelope to: Wizards of the Coast, P.O. Box 707, Renton, WA, 98057-0707, Attn: Artwork Listing. To help us respond quickly, please send other requests separately.

Wizards of the Coast provides the Artwork Availability List and Artist Contact Sheet as a service to its customers and the artists it employs. The listing is an offer by the artists or the artists' representatives to negotiate. Wizards of the Coast makes no guarantees as to availability, pricing, or accuracy of the information contained within.

Rob Alexander
P.O. Box 1558
Mercer Island,
WA 98040

PRINTS
$20 prints are lithographs, editions of 950; all others are $40 photo prints, editions of 35-50. All prints signed and numbered. s&h included.

Magic: The Gathering
Arena ($20), Web, Hidden Path
Fallen Empires
Floral Spuzzem, Icatian Scout, Spectral Cloak ($20), Brassclaw Orcs, Rubinia Soulsinger

Randy Asplund-Faith
2101 South Circle Drive
Ann Arbor, MI 48103
Phone & Fax: (313) 663-0954

PRINTS
Available for all art from **Magic: The Gathering**. Prints are reproduced at actual size of original paintings, laser printed on 8"x10" acid-free 80# paper with permanent inks. $15 each, plus $3 for shipping per whole order. MI residents add 6% sales tax. Non-**Magic** prints also available, call or write for listing.
APPEARANCES:
GenCon—Milwaukee, WI, Aug. 10-13



Julie Baroh
c/o Buster & Jinx
Productions
323 Broadway E, #216
Seattle, WA 98102

PRINTS
Two sets of lithos for sale now ($20 signed & numbered, limited; $15 signed art proof, unlimited; $3 shipping/handling; for wholesale price, inquire with artist):
Clone, Goblin Artisans

Edward Beard, Jr.
P.O. Box 622
Coventry, RI 02816

PRINTS:
Prints from *Fallen Empires* (edition of 500), $25 each
Prints from *Ice Age* (edition of 500), $25 each

Stuart Beel
P.O. Box 1562
Glasgow G2 8BW
SCOTLAND

PRINTS (Originals)
Jyhad
Voter Captivation, High Stakes
Various prints (write for more information).

Melissa A. Benson
P.O. Box 119
Stratford,
CT 06497-0119

PRINTS
Limited edition signed and numbered prints (editions of 250) are available unmatted ($25 each, 4 for $80. Add $5 per order s/h) from:
Magic: The Gathering:
Mesa Pegasus, Nightmare, Shivan Dragon
Legends:
Cat Warriors, Forethought Amulet, Ragnar
Jyhad
Animalism, Quinton McDonnell
Melissa does not sign cards through the mail.

John Bridges
c/o Red Crow Studio
207 N Boulevard, #3
Richmond, VA 23220

Steven M. Casper
P.O. Box 1175
Snellville, GA 30278

Liz Danforth
P.O. Box 64082
Phoenix, AZ 85082-4082
e-mail: e.danforth@genie.geis.com

Backgrounds by Amy Weber

PRINTS
Black-and-white non-**Magic** available now, color **Magic** prints available soon, write for price and selection/catalog.
APPEARANCES
GenCon—Milwaukee, WI, Aug. 10-13
World Fantasy Con—Baltimore, MD, Oct. 26-29
WotC's West Coast Caravan Tour—Portland to Los Angeles, Aug. 25-Sept. 3 (see ad p. 85)

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Richard Kane Ferguson
c/o Totem Studios
P.O. Box 462
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866



APPEARANCES
GenCon—Milwaukee, WI, Aug. 10-13
WotC's West Coast Caravan Tour—Portland to Los Angeles, Aug. 25-Sept. 3 (see ad p. 85)

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Kaja & Phil Foglio
c/o Palliard Press West
6756 16th Avenue NW
Seattle, WA 98117-5513
Phil also does the comics *Buck Godot, Zap-gun for Hire* and *XXXenophile*.
Write for catalog and prices.

APPEARANCES
GenCon—Milwaukee, WI, Aug. 10-13
World SF Con—Glasgow, Scotland, Aug. 24-28
Moscon—Moscow, ID, Sept. 15-17
Silvercon—Las Vegas, NV, Sept. 29-Oct. 1
Mile High Con—Denver, CO, Oct. 20-22

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Daniel R. Frazier
3035 O'Neal Parkway T-19
Boulder, CO 80301

PRINTS
I have both **Magic** and non-**Magic** prints for sale. All prices include s/h.
He's Back (b&w, 18x24), $15
Halls of Avarice (b&w, 18x24), $15
Halls of Avarice (color, 6x8), $5
The Lost Mox Diamond (color, 6x4), $3
Blue Dragon Profile (8x6), $5
Fallen Empires
Orcish Veteran, $5
Ice Age
Cap of the Ice Jester, $5; Fire Covenant, $5

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Randy R. Gallegos
5667 Snell Ave. #214
San Jose CA 95123
Phone: (408) 226-4319
E-mail: plumage@hooked.net

PRINTS
Signed and numbered. Photo prints (editions of 500) $16 each, s/h included. CA residents add 8.25% tax.
Jyhad
Dorian Strack, Wake with Evening's Freshness
Ice Age
Dance of the Dead (Limited edition of 950, signed and numbered, $20 +$1 s/h)

..... ⸗ .....

Doug Gregory
44-19 31st Avenue
Long Island City, NY 11103

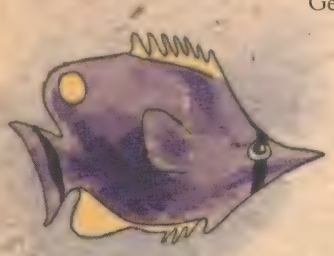
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Quinton Hoover
P.O. Box 469
Baker City, OR 97814

PRINTS
Lithos (edition of 950) signed/numbered, $20 each, s/h included.
Pixie Queen, Orcish Veteran, Vodalian Mage

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Heather Hudson
117 E Louisa Street, #307
Seattle, WA 98102



PRINTS
Limited edition proof prints, signed & matted, $20 plus shipping.
Zephyr Falcon, Toreador
Justicar, Burst of Sunlight
APPEARANCES
Orycon—Portland, OR, Nov. 10-12

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Scott Kirschner
2300 Walnut Street, #334
Philadelphia, PA 19103

..... ⸗ .....

Nicola Leonard
P.O. Box 16284
Seattle, WA 98116

PRINTS
Signed limited editions of 850 ($20 + $3 s/h).
Ice Age
Mystic Might, Green Scarab
APPEARANCES
GenCon—Milwaukee, WI, Aug. 10-13

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Anson Maddocks
c/o Mortal Graphics
P.O. Box 69765
Seattle, WA 98168
Phone: (206) 248-4297; (800) 668-4297

PRINTS
$15 each plus $3 s/h
Fallen Angel, Spinal Villain
More prints available soon

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Chris McLoughlin
56 Milbrook Drive
Old Hall Estate
Kirkby, Merseyside L32 1TF, UK

PRINTS
Scorn of Adonis, $750,
J.S. Simmons Esq, $750, Tasha Morgan, $750

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Jeff Menges
c/o Skaircrow Graphics
P.O. Box 593
Northport, NY 11768-0593

PRINTS
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Zombie Master, Haunting Wind, Tracker, Goblin War Drums
APPEARANCES
GenCon—Milwaukee, WI, Aug. 10-13
World Fantasy Con—Baltimore, MD, Oct. 26-29
Shorecon—Asbury Park, NJ, Sept. 22-24

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Ken Meyer, Jr.
3467 Bevis St.
San Diego, CA 92111

APPEARANCES
GenCon—Milwaukee, WI, Aug. 10-13
"Everyone drop by to see me at my first GenCon, I'll have my own booth! Look for recent work in **Vampire: The Eternal Struggle**, *Ice Age*, **Rage**, **Shadowfist** and my own comic book, *Kilroy is Here*. I have a catalog of work available as prints, T-shirts, and original art for $5 at [above address]."

..... ⸗ .....

Pat Morrissey
Contact can be made through WotC.

APPEARANCES
GenCon—Milwaukee, WI, Aug. 10-13
(will have originals and prints)

..... ⸗ .....



William O'Connor
28 Central Street
Huntington, NY 11743

..... ⸗ .....

Margaret Organ-Kean
c/o Moonstone Illustrations
1916 Pike Place #12-177
Seattle, WA 98101
E-mail: 76506.1633@compusrv.com; M.Organ on GEnie

PRINTS
Original illustrations for **Jyhad** and *Fallen Empires*, as well as other paintings and pen & ink drawings are available at Wizards Gallery in Seattle, WA. Lithographs (signed & numbered, editions of 950) of Ivory Tower and Spore Flower are also available at Wizards Gallery.
APPEARANCES
World Fantasy Con—Baltimore, MD, Oct. 26-29
Orycon—Portland, OR, Nov. 10-12
Margaret will sign up to six cards. Include appropriate SASE.

..... ⸗ .....

Mark Poole
121 Old Sugar Hill Road
Lexington, SC 29072

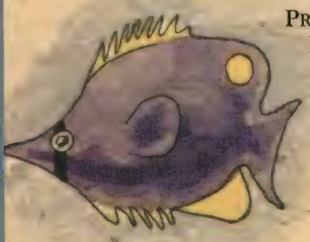
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Alan Rabinowitz
2898 Mandalay Beach Road
Wantagh, NY 11793

UPCOMING WORKS
Vampire: The Eternal Struggle
Magic—*Homelands*
APPEARANCES
GenCon—Milwaukee, Aug. 10-13

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Douglas Shuler
P.O. Box 3145
Boulder, CO 80307-3145
E-mail: darkjedi@ix.netcom.com



PRINTS
Pictures are 100% size and printed on 100 lb. acid-free paper with a high-gloss varnish and a 2 1/2" simulated mat border, print size 10 5/8" x 12". $20 each. Please include $2 s/h per order. Will sign and personalize prints if requested. Any cards sent to be autographed without a self-addressed, self-stamped envelope will be summarily sacrificed to the Lord of the Pit.
Serra Angel, Northern Paladin, Veteran Bodyguard, Frozen Shade, Demonic Tutor, Prodigal Sorcerer

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Brian Snoddy
P.O. Box 16284
Seattle, WA 98116

PRINTS
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Ice Age
Battle Frenzy, Drift of the Dead
APPEARANCES
GenCon—Milwaukee, WI Aug. 10-13

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Ron Spencer
c/o Nightfall Ltd.
202 9th Street
Aurora, NB 68818

PRINTS
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NéNé Thomas
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Salt Lake City, UT 84111

PRINTS
Lithographs, unmatted. Please add $3 s/h.
Ice Age
Folk of the Pines, $12 , Whiteout, $12, Hecatomb, $12
Jyhad
.44 Magnum, $15

..... ⸗ .....

Richard Thomas
c/o White Wolf Services
4598 Stonegate Industrial Blvd.
Stone Mountain, GA 30083

..... ⸗ .....

Drew Tucker
Contact Drew through Wizards of the Coast.

PRINTS
Signed and numbered, $20 each.
Clockwork Beast, Dandan

..... ⸗ .....

Susan Van Camp
768 Tacken Street
Flint, MI 48532
Phone: (810) 239-6410
E-mail: 102026.764@compuserve.com

PRINTS
Send SASE for print listing.
Wyluli Wolf, Hymn to Tourach, Many others
If you wish to have a cards autographed, please include SASE to return the cards. Limit the number to 5 cards.

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Bryon Wackwitz
c/o Mutt Studios
7014-B Frankford Ave.,
Suite 101
Philadelphia, PA 19135
Phone: (215) 331-8483
Fax: (215) 331-1417

PRINTS
$20 matted, $35 framed
Legends
Lady Caleria, Pendelhaven
Bryon will also be producing runs of 500 postcards of Shatter, both Order of Leitbur cards plus one werewolf piece. $3 each or 4 for $10. Please limit autograph requests to 2 cards. Send SASE.

..... ⸗ .....

Anthony Waters
1004 Maple Street
Edmonds, WA 98020

..... ⸗ .....

Amy Weber
Contact can be made through WotC.

APPEARANCES
GenCon—Milwaukee, WI, Aug. 10-13
Amy will sign cards, but asks for your patience—responding to lots of mail takes time.

..... ⸗ .....

Robyn Williamson
Original etchings available through: Artworks Gallery, 155 South Main, Seattle, WA 98104 (206) 625-0932

..... ⸗ .....

The following artists can be contacted through Wizards of the Coast:

Sandra Everingham
Daniel Gelon
Christopher Rush
Mark Tedin
Tom Wänerstrand

..... ⸗ .....

TALKING WITH
ROB ALEXANDER

by Jenny Scott
&
Amy Weber

Ordinarily, an artist's astrological sign wouldn't seem particularly relevant, but in the case of Rob Alexander, it is. Rob is a Gemini, the sign of the Twins, and indeed there is much about him that is dual in nature. With long hair, intense slate-gray eyes, and an occasional mischievous smile one could only call "elfin," Rob can look as otherworldly as the worlds of his paintings. And yet, just as his work is grounded in the realism of the natural world ("The Savannah looks like a savannah," he says), so Rob is "grounded" when it comes to the business of art. He knows when to be the Dreamer and when to be the Businessman, and he excels at both. Trained in realistic illustration but a devoted student of the old masters ("Old Dead Guys Who Knew How To Paint"), Rob calls himself "a fine artist who's been doing an awful lot of illustration." Indeed, Rob is one of those rare artists blessed with the dual gifts of being able to portray things visually and to tell stories; his favorite science-fiction and fantasy authors are those who write from a visual point of view, and by the same token, many of his paintings tell their own stories.

We interviewed Rob in his Seattle home-studio, surrounded by boxes, tall shelves, easels, bouquets of flowers in various stages of decay, photos of friends and loved ones, pinwheels, big mounted bugs, animal skulls...the usual decor that we've come to expect of an artist's space. Prints of classic paintings by artists Rob admires hang up high, while beneath them, shelves hold art books and science-fiction novels. Rob's wife, Susan Alexander, also a painter, joins us for the interview. She confided that recently she took a photo of Rob's back while he was painting; that's what he looks like most of the time, she said.

Amy: Did you always want to be an artist when you grew up?

Rob: Yes, art was just something that I always did, since I was a kid. I can remember the sketchbooks and sketchbooks I went through: the dinosaur period and the spaceship period. At the end of high school, when everybody was worried about what they were going to do as a career and with their life, that was the only thing that I wanted to do for any length of time. So I stopped doing what it was that I was good at, which was math and science, and started doing art.



Jenny: You went to art school, didn't you? Which one was it?

Rob: It was the Alberta College of Art up in Canada, although first I went to university for one year and hated it. I took fine art, and they (fellow students) just wanted to starve and be happy, and I didn't like that at all. I ended up with a job in a graphic design firm doing mechanical art, layout and paste-up. It paid the bills, but I realized right away what I wanted to do was illustration. I was getting further and further away from that, so I ended up quitting that job after a couple of years, going back to the Alberta College of Art and taking realistic illustration.

I GUESS THEIR DEFINITION WAS IF YOU GET PAID FOR IT AHEAD OF TIME AND IT'S FOR SOMEONE ELSE, IT'S AN ILLUSTRATION. IF YOU GET PAID FOR IT AFTER THE FACT, AND IT'S FOR YOURSELF, IT'S FINE ART. I THOUGHT WELL, THAT'S OKAY, BUT IN THAT CASE ALL OF THE FINE ART THAT I REALLY LIKE FROM THE OLD MASTERS WERE REALLY JUST ILLUSTRATIONS, SO WHERE DO YOU DRAW THE LINE?



The school, unfortunately, was pretty much divided down the middle. If you're walking in the front door, the left-hand side was commercial art and photography, and the right-hand side was fine art, sculpture, jewelry, textiles, and everything like that. The left-hand side wanted to do realistic art, the right-hand side was ready to kill them for it. So the whole school setup was one of antagonism.

LEFT: STUDIO OF ROB ALEXANDER PHOTO BY: ROB ALEXANDER
RIGHT: ROB ALEXANDER PHOTO BY: PATRICIA EDAMATSU COOPER

Backgrounds by Amy Weber





I took realistic illustration, but it was always fun to go wandering through the Fine Arts department and see what they were up to. They just hated us for that.

Amy: So how would you define yourself, as an illustrator or a fine artist?

Rob: I guess I would define myself as a fine artist who's doing an awful lot of illustration right now. There is really not an awful lot of difference in my mind between the two. At university in Calgary, their definition was if you get paid for it ahead of time and it's for someone else, it's an illustration. If you get paid for it after the fact, and it's for yourself, it's fine art. I thought, "Well, that's okay," but in that case, all of the fine art that I really like from the old masters were really just illustrations, so where do you draw the line? I decided it really doesn't matter. I'm happy doing the piece. I figure there's no reason it has to be one or the other.



Amy: Which is your favorite Magic™ set?

Rob: I think it would be *Ice Age*™. I grew up in the Rockies. We moved there when I was twelve years old, so I've spent a lot of time in the mountains. That is the type of geography that I personally identify with or would most like to live in. And given a chance to paint ice-covered land forms and people out in the frozen waste and snowdrifts, that was a lot of fun for me. I love painting mountains.

YOU CAN DO COKE,
BUT CAN YOU DO PEPSI?

Amy: Has Magic affected your artwork?

Rob: I'm not sure if it's affected my artwork. The success of the game has certainly affected my career and my opportunities. I mean it's given me a chance to work on basically whatever I want. You guys (Wizards of the Coast) leave me alone on that. It's like, "Here are the pieces, here's the deadline. Go away and have fun." In addition to the steady stream of work, of course, everybody else is doing their own trading card games, and so I'm getting calls from other companies. But even outside of the gaming industry, a lot of people know **Magic**. They respect it, and if you've worked on it, it just gives you that much more of an "in." Even if people don't play the game, they've heard of it.

Jenny: Most of your work has been in the fantasy industry?

Rob: Yeah, almost exclusively. That's really what I prefer to work in, in terms of the visual medium. I can still tell all the stories that I want to tell and convey what I want, and I also get a chance to make imaginary or illusionary places. For me, that's a lot of the fun of it. If I had to do something that was entirely present-day and realistic, or something that was more editorial, it wouldn't be nearly as enjoyable.

Jenny: Are there other markets that you are interested in?

Rob: Most definitely. I'm not going to restrict myself, but I'd love to do children's books, and I would love to do matte painting for movies. I like doing sequential illustration. I don't like doing comic book work necessarily. I'd like to be able to do it where I can actually fully render and finish each image and have the chance to develop characters and scenarios and events throughout a book sequentially and thematically, rather than [have] a whole series of unrelated one-shot images.

In some of the **Magic** cards I've started doing my own stories and scenarios to fit with the cards. Some of the characters start repeating, and sequential events start happening. If somebody actually put the cards down in the proper order, they could find a story and follow it along. I don't care if anybody else gets it or not. I'm having fun doing it.

Jenny: That's one of the things that I notice about your work, actually. Oftentimes your pieces will tell a complete story.

Rob: That's something that has definitely

TOP: SPECTRAL CLOAK (FROM *MAGIC: THE GATHERING—LEGENDS*)
INSET: NATURAL RHYTHM (UNPUBLISHED)
BOTTOM: INSOMNIAC (ILLUSTRATION FOR *AMAZING STORIES*, ©1991)

been developing. If I just sit down and start to do something, with no starting point and no destination in mind, then I have no idea how to get there. If I can come up with a story and an idea of who the characters are, why they're there, what they're doing, then it starts to give me an idea of what they'd be wearing, what they would really be doing. And so I start developing a story in my own mind to use as a compass when I am doing the picture and trying to put it all together.

Jenny: Have you illustrated books before?

Rob: No, I have done a fair bit of work for *Marion Zimmer Bradley's Fantasy Magazine*, which I really like because they always ask for three or four pictures from the same story. That's really my only venue right now for sequential illustration. I've done book covers, but that is sort of the opposite—that's trying to sum up a whole book in one picture. That is certainly fun, but it's not quite as much fun as if I could go back in and develop a character sequentially, to keep going and show them at different times in their life, or show different scenes in the story, show how they're reacting to it and what's going on.

MY WORK HAS ALWAYS BEEN REALLY STRONGLY GROUNDED IN THE REAL WORLD AROUND ME. THAT WAS WHAT I STARTED FINDING REALLY BEAUTIFUL, AND THAT'S WHAT MADE ME WANT TO PICK UP A PAINTBRUSH.

Amy: Do you do mostly color work? You said you did some work for Marion Zimmer Bradley's magazine—was that black-and-white?



Rob: It was reproduced in black-and-white. I don't like doing black-and-white work. Pencil is a lot of fun, but it's really a pain to reproduce, and I've never liked doing inking work. When I work, I like to have the end results visible, but the process invisible. Which means I don't like the marks to show necessarily. Even when I do oil painting, which I've only been getting into for about the last six months, it's really smooth, and you don't see the brush strokes. With watercolor of course, once the water evaporates, you've just got a flat layer of paint. With pen and ink, the only thing you have is the individual little marks you're making and that composes your whole picture, so it was not a medium that ever appealed to me.



I've done a lot of work that has been reproduced in black-and-white, but I've done almost all of it in color and then just had somebody halftone it. I knew I wanted to get into a market that was exclusively color illustration, whether it be book covers, children's books or whatever, so I wanted a portfolio that would show that I could work in color. So any time I got a job, even if it was black-and-white, I would try and do it in color so that I could put it in a portfolio and it would look more representative of what I want to do. Art directors are notorious for having absolutely no imagination, and if they don't see it in your portfolio, they just figure you can't do it. The quote that everybody used to throw around when I was in school was "You can do Coke, but can you do Pepsi?"

Jenny: What other kinds of things have you worked on recently or are you working on now?

Rob: I'm working on the next **Magic** expansion set. I did a piece for the Microprose **Magic** game. I'm working on **EVERWAY™** [WotC's new roleplaying game line]. Periodically I'm doing work with the **Ars Magica™** line. Outside of WotC, I'm working on the deck that Iron Crown Enterprises is putting together based on Tolkien, which I think is due out around spring of next year. And Alderac Entertainment, which is the company that puts out *Shadis*, is doing a game based in feudal Japan. I'm also doing a box cover for the **Shadowfist™** mass market edition, called *Combat in Kowloon*.

Amy: You've been busy!

Rob: After that, I really, really want two weeks off. [*Laughs*] I had a vacation a couple of years ago; I snuck away for about three days and that was about it. I'm really looking forward to getting some time off.

Jenny: Where would you go?

Rob: Where would I? Nowhere. I don't want to go anywhere. I want to stay here, I want to sleep in, I want to spend time with Susan, I want to just go for walks, I will probably go to the zoo, I will spend a full day in the rose garden, probably just lying there under a rosebush, looking up or something.

Jenny: What are the aspects of freelancing that you've found the most difficult?



Obviously, not having time is one of the negative aspects.

Rob: Not having time for a life outside of work. I didn't realize when I got into this how much work this was going to be. Basically, you're running your own business. When I first got out of school, I talked to a couple of artists' agents, and it seems that if you're good enough to make it worth their while to take you as a client, you're almost good enough to where you don't need them—you can get work on your own. I've been on my own since I got out school, and I'm really glad I've been working steadily with WotC because if I had an irregular flow of work, then I'd be spending a lot more time doing self-promotion, which would leave me a lot less time to paint.

TOP: ILLUSTRATION FOR **ARS MAGICA** POSTER
MIDDLE: ARENA
BOTTOM: ILLUSTRATION FOR *MZB FANTASY MAGAZINE*, © 1994

FOR ME, IF THE PIECE ITSELF DOESN'T LOOK GOOD WHEN I'M FINISHED WITH IT, I DON'T CARE HOW IT LOOKS ON THE CARD. I DON'T WANT TO DO SOMETHING TOO FAST THAT LOOKS CRUDE FULL-SIZE...

Also, I'm very shy by nature. I'm not very comfortable going to parties and talking to people and meeting folks that I don't know, but you have to do that as a freelancer. I don't have a company that fronts for me, so unless I get out there and try and convince clients that they need to hire me more than they need to hire the next person in line, I won't get a job.



Amy: Tell us a little about your creative process. Do you sketch? Do you draw from life, photo reference?

Rob: Yes. [*Laughs*] My work has always been really strongly grounded in the real world around me. That was what I started finding really beautiful, and that's what made me want to pick up a paintbrush and start putting something down. I mean, my imagination was active, but I wanted to reflect the real world around me. And I've never really lost that. If you look at my pictures, they're very grounded in reality, whether I'm creating some imaginary thing that doesn't exist, montaging strange things together like I did for Illusionary Terrain, or even doing landscapes like the ones I did back in the very first set. The Savannah looks like a savannah. I enjoy doing stuff like that.

So my creative process is sort of two-fold. I'm always looking at things, sketching things out, and trying basically to understand the world. That's an ongoing process. Then, when I sit down to do a specific image, I just start sketching, start making things up. I ask myself, "What do I want to do with this particular image? What is it that excites me about it?" Sometimes I get a sketch and then try to go and set it up later on for a photo shoot, which is something I usually do.

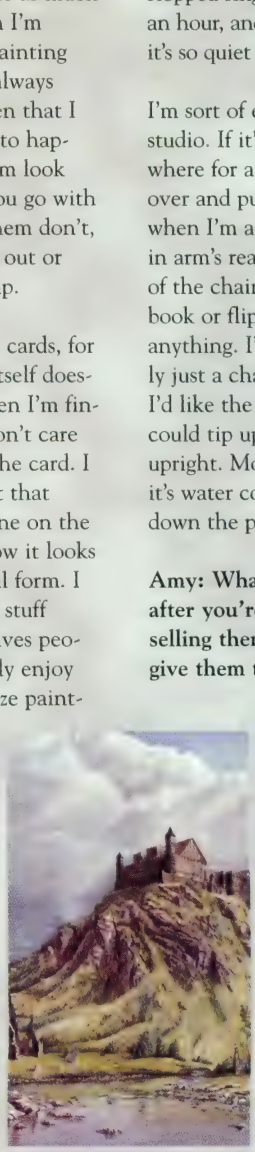
Photo reference is useful because after the initial sketch, you sometimes discover that you've created impossible anatomy or you've broken people or something like that, and at that point you have to make a decision: Either you're going to go with it anyway or you're going to change what you initially sketched. So the initial sketch, and then some photo reference, and then I start putting together the final drawing at the same size as it's going to be painted at.

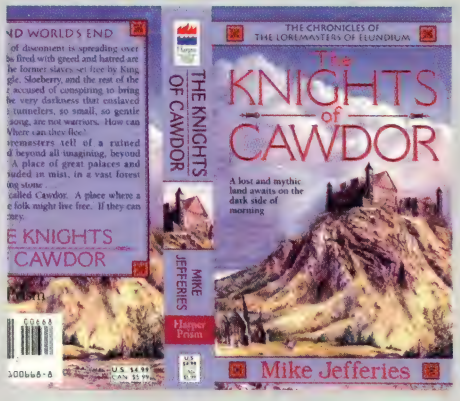
Once that's done, I don't usually bother with doing a color composite or an awful lot of tonal study. I'd rather just dive in and work with what's happening on the painting. I work with watercolor, and I can control it really well, but it's also always got some elements of unpredictability to it. I feel if I work out too much of it ahead of time that a) I'm doing too much work on the process and not enough on the end product, and b) it doesn't allow for as much spontaneity when I'm working on the painting itself. There are always things that happen that I wasn't expecting to happen. Some of them look really neat and you go with it, and some of them don't, so you take them out or you cover them up.

Also, with **Magic** cards, for me, if the piece itself doesn't look good when I'm finished with it, I don't care how it looks on the card. I don't want to do something too fast that looks crude full-size but will look fine on the card. I'm concerned mostly with how it looks as a final illustration, in the original form. I figure that way, even if some of the stuff drops out when it goes to card, it gives people something that they would really enjoy looking at when they see the full-size painting.

Jenny: What about the other aspects? Do you listen to music or have the TV on?

Rob: Always listen to music, never the TV—visuals distract me. Music, whether it has words or not, is not really intrusive at all. I can sing along with the song and afterwards I can't tell you what song I just heard, which is great for me. I usually work with headphones on, because that way the only thing I've got is my music and what is going on on the paper. I tend to prefer working at night—it's quieter, the phone doesn't ring. Thank God I'm not Jesper [Myrfors, former art director for Wizards of the Coast]. I was over at his place the other night, and his phone never stopped ringing. I ended up on his phone for an hour, and he's going, "I'm wondering why it's so quiet in here."





I'm sort of expansionistic when I set up my studio. If it's flat and not going to go anywhere for a short period of time, I will take it over and put stuff on it. On the other hand, when I'm actually working, I need everything in arm's reach. I don't want to have to get out of the chair to go across the room and grab a book or flip a tape over or put in a CD or anything. I'm working toward having basically just a chair with a huge circular desk, and I'd like the desk sectional so that parts of it could tip up when I need to do paintings upright. Most of the time I work flat. Since it's water color, I don't want paint running down the page where I didn't intend it.

Amy: What do you do with your pieces after you're finished? Are you comfortable selling them, or do you hang on to them, give them to friends?

Rob: [*Laughs*] Yes. Pieces that have been particular milestones for me or that I'm really attached to, I keep in my permanent collection. The very first piece I did in color that was published in color is mine. The first book cover I did, admittedly it was black-and-white, but it was my first national book cover; that's mine. I will do better things later on, but I will never do the *first* thing later on. That's the one I want to keep. The piece that is my business

TOP: BOOK COVER FOR *KNIGHTS OF CAWDOR*
MIDDLE: MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH (UNPUBLISHED)
BOTTOM: ORIGINAL ILLUSTRATION FOR BOOK COVER TO *KNIGHTS OF CAWDOR*

card is mine. That was the first piece in about three years that I had the chance to do whatever the heck I wanted. Somebody said, "We need it for a name tag for Norwescon, you can do anything you want as long as we've got lots of white area to put the type over." So I said, "Okay, this just gives me a chance to do something I want to do." I've got a list of about seventy paintings I want to do. If the world ended and there were no more jobs, then I would just go and paint these things for the next several years and then I would be happy. Whenever I get a chance to pull something off of that list, I am happy. I don't care, you don't have to pay me, I just want to paint it.

Amy: Whenever you want to do that for *The Duelist*, just let me know.

Rob: Both the pieces for *The Duelist* [the cover and the poster] are from that list. That's why I'm having so much fun with them, you know. Those are not pieces that you do for the money. Those are just pieces that something inside of me wants to put down on paper. Those are the pieces I keep. Some of them I give away. Not an awful lot, but people really like getting gifts of artwork. [*Rob's wife Susan points at herself*] I can't understand why! [*Laughs*]

I WOULDN'T MIND A WORLD RUN BY ARTISTS. EDUCATION WOULD NOT BE UNDERFUNDED, BUT DEFENSE SPENDING SURE AS HELL WOULD.

The rest of them I sell. A lot of the **Magic** work I've got at the Wizards Gallery over in the University District [in Seattle], and I figure they're doing their best full-time to try and sell stuff. It leaves me time to paint.

Amy: What thoughts do you have about the gaming industry and where it's headed?

Rob: I didn't grow up in the gaming industry. I played some games, but I had not done any work for them, or really even thought of it as a serious possibility until **Magic**. Now it's just everywhere. The industry, I'm going to guess, has become a lot better and friendlier for the artist to work in. Like I said, I didn't work in it before **Magic**, but **Magic** has pretty much set the standard for royalties being paid on card games, and if anybody asks me to work on a game and they don't pay royalties, I don't work on the game.





And because of **Magic's** success, there are copycat games all over the place, which, if nothing else, are keeping an awful lot of artists from starving or flipping burgers. In terms of where the industry is going, the potential is pretty much unlimited. I think you've got something that has revitalized the industry and brought gaming to a portion of the population that never really gave a damn about it before or wasn't willing to spend an awful lot of money on it. You've got them, and it's basically, "What do we want to do with them now?" You can ignore them and they'll go buy something else, or you can put out products and keep their attention. Then we can continue to do whatever we want.

Amy: Conquer the world.

Rob: I wouldn't mind a world run by artists. Education would not be underfunded, but defense spending sure as hell would. [*Laughs*]

Amy: We've been to meetings together about artists' rights and things like that. Can you talk a little about how you feel about those kinds of issues?

Rob: Basically, freelance illustrators don't have a group body to go out and protect us or get what's right or what's fair or anything like that. So I think, as a result, freelance artists need to know what their rights are and be very willing to stand up and enforce them. That's going to make a few people unhappy, but most of the cases I've run up against unfairness, the people just really didn't understand what's involved or how much time something takes.

For example, somebody one time wanted me to work on an illustrated book. The people were great, but when it came time to talk money and I started breaking down the numbers, I said, "Look, I would make more money flipping burgers for a year than I would make on this book, and it's going to be a lot more work. Financially, it's just not viable for me. I can't afford to live on this much money." I can understand a publisher wanting to do something and they'd really like to see it come out but they only have five thousand dollars. But how far is that going to go over a whole year? Not very far.

Things like that have probably made me less-than-popular with a few people, but you've got to be willing to stand up and say, "Look, this is real life here. These are the facts, this is what I need, this is what you don't need but are trying to take anyway, and this is the compromise I think we need to reach." It makes for boring reading sometimes, but if you don't know the business and legal aspects of being a freelance artist, you're going to get taken advantage of, either deliberately or accidentally. And since there is no single body out there to protect you, you've got to take care of yourself.

Jenny: Along those lines, what kind of advice would you give to people who are just starting out as freelancers?

Rob: I would suggest that they talk to other freelance artists because most of us are really approachable. Ask them for the benefit of their experience. What have they run up against? What did they like? What did they not like? Who did they like to work for, and who did they not? I talk to other artists a lot when I go to science-fiction conventions.

TOP: THE JOURNEY (ILLUSTRATION FOR *AMAZING STORIES*, © 1992)
INSET: TWIDDLE (FROM **MAGIC: THE GATHERING**)

People will tell you, unasked, who the jerks were and who to avoid working for. And if you ask them, they will also tell you who the really nice people were. I think they're a little more forthcoming with the bad news than the good, but they're willing to tell anyway.

It's not a bad idea to borrow some copies of contracts from people. Even a contract from a couple of years ago for a project that is already done and gone gives you a chance to ask whoever you're borrowing it from, "What does this mean?" or "Were you happy with this? If so, why? If not, why not?" Look at some legal guides. I know Todd Crawford has the *Legal Guide for Visual Artists*, and there is the *Graphical Artist Guild Pricing and Ethical Guidelines*. Most of them have templates in the back, which are generic contracts for certain situations. Whether you're doing a full-page magazine ad, or a book cover, or you're designing a sculpture for the lobby of the building, it will give you an idea what the fair and reasonable terms are on both sides.

I also think it's important to do your research enough to know where your markets are. If I know somebody is planning on starting a line of books or something like that, it would make sense for me to get together with them. Or if somebody has just gone from doing science-fiction books to cookbooks, I don't want to send them a portfolio. It's a waste of everybody's time. Usually the illustrator has a pretty good idea what they want to do, and they can probably do it. The problem is always finding the market for it. There is a market out there, but if you can't find it, then you can't get your work out and you can't survive and pay the rent. Basically, if you want to find the information, it's out there to be found, but you need to be willing to go out and get it.

Amy: Where do you derive inspiration from?

Rob: Inspiration is virtually anywhere. I seem to get really good ideas when the emotions are running really high; when I'm extremely depressed or extremely happy or making love, and sometimes when I am falling to sleep. That sort of thing. It's when the conscious mind has been more or less shut off and the rest of you is able to surface and sort of go, "Hey, think about this for a minute!"

In terms of artists that I really find influential for me, most of them are the old masters. I loved what they did and the combination of realism and imagination that they put into their pieces. They studied life, and they studied anatomy to the point where they could make it up out of their head. And having done that, they could put together pictures and perspectives and combinations you probably couldn't set up even if you did have a camera at the time.

I love Vermeer. I love Da Vinci. I loved Michelangelo's drawings of men…I actually made a list the other day—I don't know where I put it—because I knew you were going to ask me that question. I like Van Dyck. I love Rembrandt and Rubens. Those are the main ones that are coming to mind at the moment. [*Amy is nodding*] Those are all your favorites too? See, I could just let you answer my questions and I could stop talking. [*All laugh*] I like Bouguereau for the skin tones definitely. He's not an old master in that he didn't live as long ago, but he's dead so he's one of the Old Dead Guys Who Knew How to Paint.



In terms of some of the present-day artists, I'm really fond of Richard Berry's work. It's less representational in a lot of ways than some people's. It's less slick. It's got more life and emotion to it than some of the work I'm used to looking at. I like Tom Canty for the same reason. His design sense is really superb. I also like James Gurney. I had a chance to meet him at Norwescon, which was really cool. I like the way he paints. It reminds me an awful lot of the way people painted just before the Impressionists. It's a combination of really thin, loose washes and thick opaque paints, putting in smaller opaque areas to really bring out the forms that he wants. I remember looking at a show of his originals down at the WorldCon in San Francisco a couple of years ago and thinking, "People have not painted like that in a hundred years." Just looking at his physical technique of putting the paint on the canvas was inspirational. When I pick up a paintbrush I'm not doing the same thing because what draws me to the painting is not the same as what draws him. But looking at it, I really appreciated his technique and the texture that he got just with the paint, and building up the forms that way was really nice to look at.

Amy: What about other Magic artists? Do you have a favorite? In every other interview, someone has mentioned a favorite.

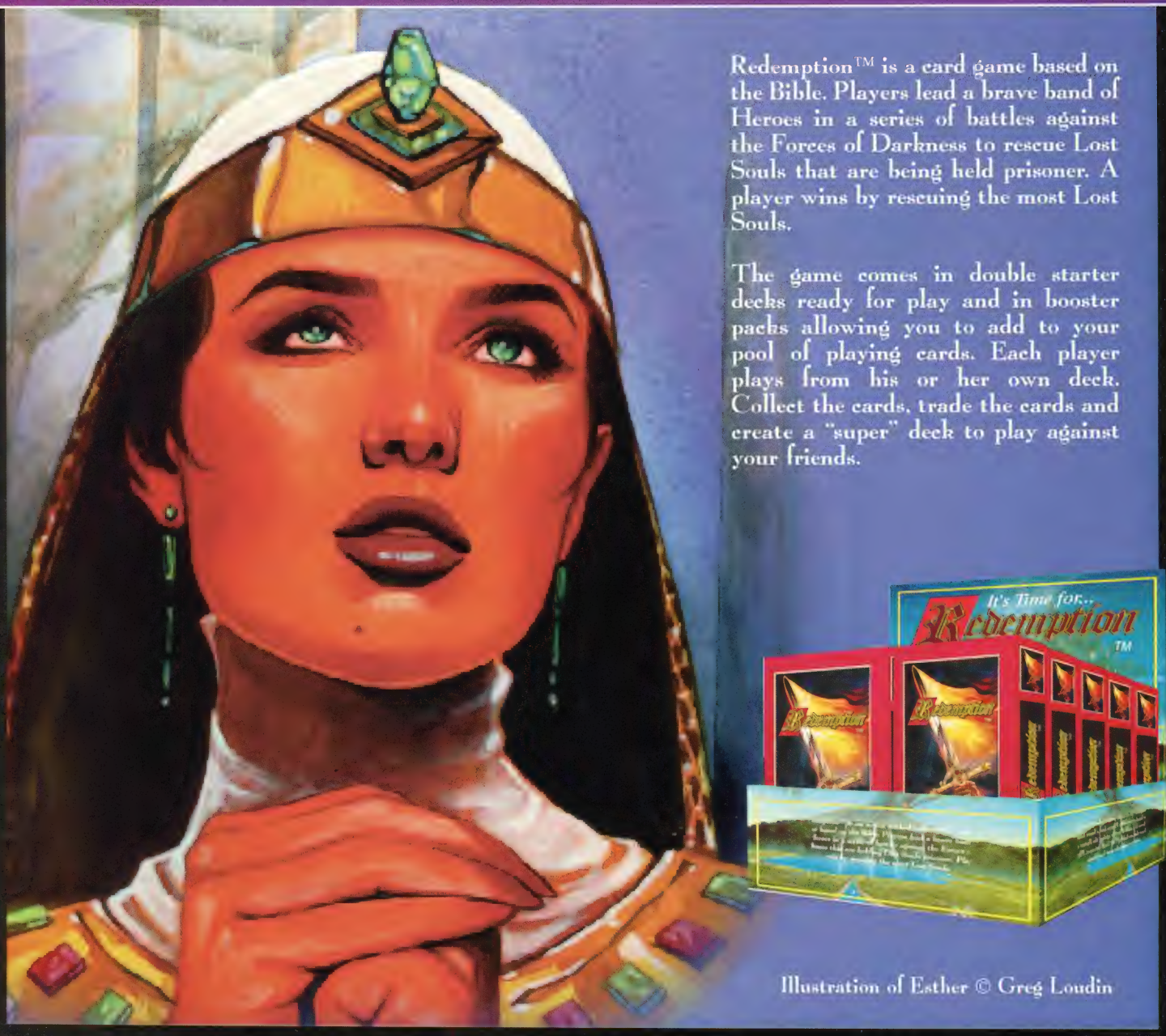
Rob: [*Laughs*] I've got a couple of people that I really like. I'm really fond of Anson Maddocks, Mark Tedin, and Anthony Waters, and actually for the same reason for all three of them. Their stuff has got a spontaneity to it, and a massive amount of creativity is just gushing out in their pictures. They don't seem to be as concerned with how the real world is really put together so much as with just exactly whatever they want to paint. I like that. I find it very refreshing to look at. There are enough people doing things like I do. These things are really fresh, really fun. It's sort of helped push me in my own work, and some of the pieces I've done for **Magic** have been definitely coming out of that.

The Houses of Hermes™ [a book in the **Ars Magica** roleplaying line] cover was a lot like that for me. I had just done an awful lot of **Magic** cards that were really well planned out and meticulous. I had done the second **Primal Order** cover, which was just bigger and more meticulous, and I just really wanted to get a big brush and do something fun and stupid and crazy. I got a big canvas and a big one-and-a-half-inch paint brush, and half an hour later I had knocked in the whole design. I went back in and finished it off, and being that big and working with oil paint gave me the flexibility to just put things in and if I didn't like them, wipe them out or paint over them. To some extent you can do that in watercolor, but not nearly as easily as you can in oil paint. In watercolor, once you put it down, you've got to live with it.

Rob's contact information and 1995 convention appearances are listed in the Artists' Announcements on p. 74. He says, "I should let everybody know that if they get a hold of me, I will reply to e-mail, but not necessarily the next day." (We hope it's because he's under a rose-bush, finally taking a few days off.)

HIDDEN PATH (FROM **MAGIC: THE GATHERING**—*THE DARK*)

Redemption™

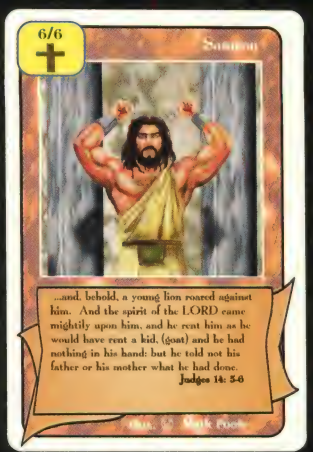


Redemption™ is a card game based on the Bible. Players lead a brave band of Heroes in a series of battles against the Forces of Darkness to rescue Lost Souls that are being held prisoner. A player wins by rescuing the most Lost Souls.

The game comes in double starter decks ready for play and in booster packs allowing you to add to your pool of playing cards. Each player plays from his or her own deck. Collect the cards, trade the cards and create a "super" deck to play against your friends.

Illustration of Esther © Greg Loudin









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CARD CONNECTION



Fallen Empires™	$60.00
Revised™ Boosters	$100.00
Revised™ Starters	$125.00
Legends™	$800.00
The Dark™	$225.00
Black-bordered **Star Trek®** Starters	$175.00
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WOTC NEWS

Deckmaster Update

Magic: The Gathering—Ice Age™

Magic: The Gathering*—*Ice Age made its debut in a special sneak preview tournament held at the Canadian Card and Comics Spectacular in Toronto on June 2–4 (see article p.63). The tournament was a huge success and everyone was very happy with **Magic**'s first stand-alone expansion. If you haven't yet picked up a deck, check it out and see what you've been missing.

Magic: The Gathering—Chronicles™

Chronicles, the set reprinting many hard-to-find cards from *Legends*™, *The Dark*™, *Arabian Nights*™, and *Antiquities*™, may beat this issue of *The Duelist* to market (see article on p.10). As this article is being written, Carta Mundi is printing, sorting, and packaging cards to be shipped to customers all over the world. Look for *Chronicles* in your local hobby shop.

Magic: The Gathering—Homelands™

The mystery expansion talked about in the last issue of *The Duelist* is *Homelands!* This expansion deals with the discovery of a previously lost plane in Dominia, and the quandaries that present themselves to the planewalkers that discover it.

Homelands contains not only some of the most original ideas we've had to date, but will give you a chance to learn more about some of your old favorites from **Magic: The Gathering**™.

Look for *Homelands* to be released this fall.

Netrunner™ Update

Work continues on the third **Deckmaster**™ game, **Netrunner.** Many members of the **Netrunner** team have been heard around the WotC office muttering "information wants to be free"—yet prying details about the game from them has been remarkably difficult.

The game is based on R. Talsorian's *Cyberpunk 2020* roleplaying game. In **Netrunner**, players play one of two sides: the corporation or the runner. The goal of the corporation is to advance a corporate agenda—anything from establishing space stations to performing research into encryption technologies. The goal of the runner is to acquire the agenda before the corporation has advanced it. The corporation installs ICE and builds data forts to protect its data as it's being advanced, while the runner customizes a cyberdeck with the latest equipment to break past corporate security.

Magic designer Richard Garfield is the lead designer on this game, and Chris Rush is the art director. **Netrunner** is scheduled for release late this year or early next year.

BattleTech™

Many of you have probably heard rumors about a **BattleTech** trading card game. Well, they're true! We licensed the rights to produce a **BattleTech Deckmaster** game from FASA Corporation last year. A number of excellent designs were considered, but we've now focused on one and have begun full-scale development.

FASA is helping with development, and will continue to be actively involved in the project right to the very end. We're all really excited about the project, and look forward to being able to give you juicier information as it becomes available!

Magic: The Gathering Pocket Players' Guide

Now scheduled for a fall release, the latest version of the *Pocket Players' Guide* will have the updated rules for ***Magic: The Gathering*—*Fourth Edition***, along with a complete *Fourth Edition* card list and the latest Duelists' Convocation tournament rules.

The book features a full-color cover by **Magic** artist Quinton Hoover and new interior artwork. The guide includes deck-building strategies for beginners and experts, variants of the game, as well as background information and a timeline for Dominia, and much, much more.

Prices of Magic Products to Increase

Wizards of the Coast has announced its first price increase for **Magic** products effective September, 1995.

The price increases are due to "increases in paper prices and printing costs, and a dramatic fall of the U.S. dollar in the international market," according to Peter Adkison, president of Wizards of the Coast.

Effective with all orders shipping in September, the suggested retail price for **Magic** starter decks will be $8.95 (up $1); *Fourth Edition* and *Ice Age* booster packs will be $2.95 (up $.50); *Chronicles* booster packs will be $2.45.

Backgrounds by Heather Hudson

COUNTERFEIT MAGIC CARDS

Although WotC is not in the re-sale business, we are nonetheless concerned about the number of counterfeit cards floating around out there. Between our Legal and Customer Service departments, we receive numerous calls every week regarding bogus **Magic** cards. Unfortunately, the problem seems to be growing.

Much to the dismay of some callers, we don't have a "WotC posse" to round up and string up the offenders—but if you do encounter counterfeit cards, you can file a complaint with your local law enforcement agency. In a case in upstate New York, police took statements from three people who had been defrauded. A searchwarrant was obtained for the suspect's house. Evidence was recovered, and he was taken into custody. As it turned out, he was not a big-time counterfeiter, but the point was made, and maybe other potential offenders who hear this story will think twice about going into business.

We also want to make clear that we cannot replace counterfeit cards, no matter how sad the story. In one case, a 14-year old traded most of his collection for a Pearl Mox, which was discovered to be fake. The parents enlisted the help of a retailer, and part of the collection was recovered.

Often counterfeits are printed on thinner stock, and no matter how good the print job, they just don't *feel* right.

While we don't want to encourage you to set up "sting" operations, we do want to enlist your help in collecting information and evidence, especially in cases where the alleged counterfeiter is actually printing cards, as opposed to using glue to slap a few together. We are also looking into anti-counterfeiting printing methods, which may be used in future card production.

If you have any doubt about a card, send it to us and we'll try our best to verify its authenticity. Whether or not it's a fake, we'll return it to you. Bear in mind, however, that WotC will not "trade you a box of *Legends*" for turning in counterfeit cards—so don't get any funny ideas.

BOOK PUBLISHING

The summer of 1995 has been a very exciting season for the Book Publishing department at Wizards of the Coast. With the publication of *Tapestries*, our first short story anthology (now available in trade paperback), we're turning our storytelling approach in a whole new direction, giving readers a glimpse into Dominia of a kind they'd never had before. Whether it's a ride with a goblin balloon brigade, or an encounter with a Serra angel, we're trying to make every story we tell a fresh, new way for **Magic** players to experience Dominia.

It's something we're doing with the novels, too, and we thought it might be fun to share a chat we had recently with Teri McLaren, the author of the newest **Magic** novel, *The Cursed Land* (also in bookstores now). McLaren co-wrote two Dragonlance® novels with husband Michael Williams, *Before the Mask* and *The Dark Queen*.

The first thing she talked about was where her inspiration for her **Magic** novel came from: "My heritage is Scottish and Cherokee, and these were the first peoples of both sides of the ocean," McLaren said. "My dad looks like the guy on the nickel, sans feathers, of course. He's got that really long nose and those ears that never stop growing. It was a very natural thing for me to draw upon the same imagery from both places. I teach medieval culture, and we study the cultures through myths rather than just the facts. I like to use the mythic approach rather than just archaeology to figure out how people lived. The only way you really know someone is through the stories they tell. You can't lie in a story no matter how hard you might try."

The Cursed Land is on sale now wherever HarperPrism books are sold. In October, keep an eye out for the next **Magic** novel, *The Prodigal Sorcerer*, by Mark Sumner. And for Christmas you'll see a new anthology of short stories called *Distant Planes*, featuring stories by Michael A. Stackpole, Robert Vardeman and Jane Lindskold, along with a number of other exciting writers.

ROLEPLAYING AND TABLE GAMES UPDATE

ALTER EGO™ DESIGN GROUP

As mentioned last issue, the Alter Ego Design Group, dedicated to making roleplaying games that appeal to both current roleplayers and to new audiences, will release its first game in August. Combining elements of traditional roleplaying games with the appeal of trading card games, EVERWAY™ lets players invent fantasy heroes who travel from world to world, facing new challenges, dangers, wonders, and mysteries with each step. (See "Bringing Visions to Life," p. 70.)

The *EVERWAY Game Set* will include everything that you need to play, but Alter Ego will also release related products to support the game.

The first, also to be released in August, will be the *1996 EVERWAY Calendar*. Featuring creatures illustrated by Frank Frazetta, Simon Bisley, Geof Darrow, Glenn Fabry, Rick Berry, Ian Miller, John Bolton, and Brian Froud, this calendar is for fantasy art fans of all types.

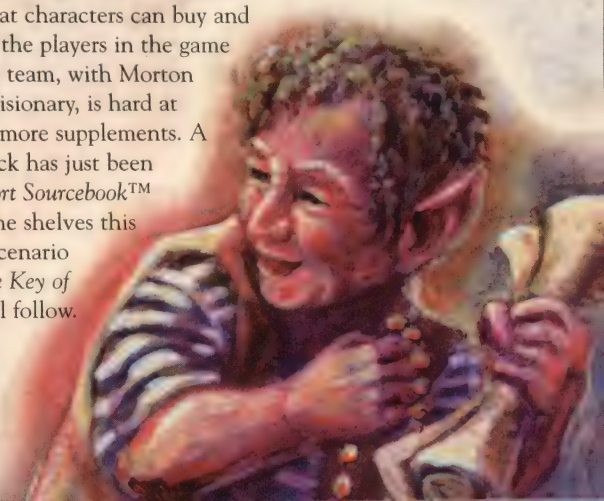
This fall, we will release the *Spherewalker™ Source Cards*. This set of 90 cards depicts people, creatures, and objects that spherewalkers—those who travel from world to world—encounter on their journeys. While useful to EVERWAY players, these cards are also for fantasy fans, card collectors, and people who play other fantasy roleplaying games.

EVERWAY, however, is just the first game to be published by the Alter Ego Design Group. Next year we will release a roleplaying game based on **Magic: The Gathering** and the worlds of Dominia. We began laying the groundwork for this roleplaying game a year ago, and now we've hired Tim Beach and Mike Selinker to come on board and take over the project. These two designers bring with them years of experience in the gaming industry.

NIGHTFALL GAMES

In 1994, WotC bought Nightfall Games of Scotland and used it as the basis for its U.K. office. Along with the talented folk of Nightfall came **SLA Industries™ (SLA)**, a roleplaying game that offers a horrific vision of a dark world dominated by style, lies, and paranoia. Serial killers, street gangs, subversive rivals, and company operatives fight for the upper hand under the watchful eye of thrill-a-minute television shows.

The **SLA** sourcebook *Karma™* presents information in the form of a magazine that characters can buy and read, immersing the players in the game world. The **SLA** team, with Morton T. Smith as its visionary, is hard at work producing more supplements. A gamemaster's pack has just been released, the *Mort Sourcebook™* which will hit the shelves this summer, and a scenario book called *The Key of Delhyread ™* will follow.



ROBORALLY™

RoboRally, WotC's fast-paced, robot race game, will return, redesigned and reprinted. Among the changes: four totally new robots. Due to some manufacturing problems, the re-release will be delayed. All miniatures are single-cast pewter, so no assembly will be required.

In addition, the **RoboRally** expansion set will be available in October. This set includes six new boards introducing six totally new board elements. Extensive technical research has gone into developing twenty-six new option cards that challenge even the most experienced programmer. Is the Mini Howitzer blasé? Never fear! With this expansion kit, your robots will have new "toys" to play with and new hazards to avoid. Lay mines and fire missiles at your enemies as you navigate new multi-level mapboards containing water hazards and teleporters.

Other News

WOTC AT GENCON

Wizards of the Coast will be running several events at this year's GenCon, Aug. 10–13 at the MECCA Convention Center in Milwaukee, WI. At our booth, there will be numerous artist appearances, as well as around-the-clock demos of all WotC products.

WotC gaming events at GenCon will include a sanctioned Type II **Magic** tournament, an *Ice Age* tournament, a **Jyhad** tournament, an **Ars Magica** event, and two **SLA Industries** events.

In addition, several members of Wizards of the Coast's Research and Development department will be running an experimental **Magic** tournament on Saturday, Aug. 12. Players will construct decks in advance of the tournament. There will be no limit on the number of any particular card that a player may include in his or her deck. However, certain cards will be assigned point values and each deck will be limited to the total points that it may contain.

A tentative list of point value assignments, as well as info on any of WotC's events, may be obtained by calling WotC customer service at (206) 624-0933. This list may also be obtained over the Internet by subscribing to the MTG-L mailing list, reading the "rec.games.trading-cards.magic.misc" Usenet newsgroup, or joining the **Magic** discussions on America Online, Compuserve, Genie, the Imagination Network or Prodigy. On AoL, contact "WotC" for all the places where Deckmaster games are discussed. On CompuServe, **Magic: The Gathering** discussion takes place in the CARDGAMES forum, in section 15 (Magic Talk) and section 16 (Magic Games). On Prodigy, contact GFHV5OA for all the places where WotC games are discussed. On the World Wide Web, use URL "http://www.wizards.com/".

A final list of point values will be available at the Wizards of the Coast booth at GenCon starting Aug. 10.

MAGIC WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

The second annual **Magic: The Gathering** World Championship will take place Aug. 5–6 in Seattle. The event is invitation-only and will feature the top players from around the world. Look for WotC's "Road to the World Title" pamphlet at your local retailer in August for a look at this year's contenders.

WOTC VS. MICROSOFT: THE IVORY CUP CHALLENGE

On June 17th, **Magic** players from Microsoft and WotC met in the first annual Ivory Cup Corporate Challenge at the Meydenbauer Center in Bellevue, WA. Each company fielded a team of four **Magic** players, determined by in-house tournaments. All proceeds from the tournament went to charity.

The Challenge was a Team Sealed Deck competition. After getting its allotment of cards, each team retired to one side of the room. The WotC team made short work of sorting the cards by color. Each member claimed one color to build a near-monochrome deck, with only a "mini"—two to four spells plus supporting land—of a second color to support it. For example, one deck was red except for two Tranquilities.

The Microsoft players took a different approach. They sorted their cards more slowly, with attention to themes as well as color. Unfortunately, they quickly discovered that their card selection lacked support for some critically-needed areas. But they did their best with what they had, building decks fairly evenly split between two colors, each with a core concept.

As the results from the opening rounds came in, it was obvious that this was a mismatch. After three rounds, the score stood at 26-10, giving WotC the win even if Microsoft swept the final round.

To test whether Microsoft's cards were really as bad as the team had claimed, the referees shuffled each team's decks back into its original stock. Then the teams switched piles, built new decks, and played a speed round of sixteen single-duel matches—Microsoft won the round 12-4.

CARAVAN TOURS

Every month, WotC will send a team of **Magic: The Gathering**™ artists, game designers, and other members of our staff to different areas of the country as part of our **Caravan**™ Tours. During these tours, we'll preview upcoming products, answer questions about WotC, answer rules questions, and of course, play games.

American Tours will be visiting Atlanta, GA, Aug. 3–6; various locations on the West Coast from Portland, OR, to Los Angeles, CA, Aug. 25–Sept. 3; San Antonio, TX, Oct. 5–8; and Ft. Lauderdale to Orlando, FL, Nov. 1–5. For a complete list, see our ad on p. 85.

INTRODUCING THEATRE ALCHEMY

Theatre Alchemy is an exciting new department at Wizards of the Coast. Responsible for the theatrical promotion of our products, Theatre Alchemy provides costumed characters from **Magic**. This year we are producing our most ambitious project yet, a three-minute video depicting a duel between Lim-Dûl, the Necromancer, and Gustha Ebbasdötter, the royal mage of Kjeldor. The video will be shown at major conventions this year.



SPOTLIGHT ON The Great Dalmuti™

BY DAVE HOWELL

To my left is a fellow **Dalmuti** player. To my right is, well, an empty spot. Beyond that, a player knocks on the table. We all wait expectantly. From under the table comes a muffled "pass." I give a little kick. We all hear "Ow! …The Great Dalmuti passes." And so it goes.

The Great Dalmuti is a new, totally non-collectable card game from Wizards of the Coast, and even out of the box it's a blast. Scrape together some friends, the sillier the better, and prepare to spend hours in a demonstration of the caste system. It takes about ten minutes to learn and about ten minutes to play a hand, although most people find the game goes on for hours because nobody wants to stop.

But there's **Dalmuti**, and there's **Dalmuti**. Around here, we tend to refer to the deluxe gonzo all-out play as "**Dalmuti** With Hats," although hats aren't strictly necessary. All that's needed is some thing to emphasize players' rankings. Hats are just a really easy and fun way to do it.



For example, the Greater Dalmuti should definitely have a grand hat, a hat with a plume or satin or diamonds or something. If you don't have a stock of stunning hats, improvise. One great place to get a crown is Burger King. I enjoy going through the drive-in and asking for "a crown…that's right, just a crown, no mayo." It gets one in the mood.

We'll move on to merchants, and leave the Lesser Dalmuti's chapeau as an exercise for you. If you're going to put hats on the merchants, keep it simple, since you'll probably need a lot of them. Baseball caps with company logos are good.



Last—and certainly least—are the peons' hats. Peon hats are the best, because you don't have to put any effort into making them comfortable, you just have to make them silly—the sillier the better. Start with a nearby waste-paper basket. You can make a bonnet by taping adjoining corners of a flyer together. Stick whatever comes to hand to the outside. Add some elastic to an empty drink cup. Make a hat out of balloons. Make them wear yarn, streamers, rubber bands, anything.



What's really going on here is getting people used to playing roles. People who are wearing a crown tend to get more "into" the idea of being the Great Dalmuti. They'll develop an attitude, start bossing people around more, sneer at the lower classes, and generally carry on. Peons will tend to snivel and moan, whine and grovel, or be appallingly obsequious. This is what you're looking for: ways to make people play their positions to the hilt. Hats are the easiest way to provide these reminders of status, but there are other ways. The rules mention having different chairs for the different positions. Give the Dalmutis armchairs, and they'll lie back in decadent bliss.

The game that I described at the top started with the Greater Peon in a chair. When he failed to collect the cards promptly for the third time, I ruled that he'd lost the right to sit in a chair, but had to kneel. Then he missed another cue, and had to sit on the floor. When he screwed up again, I banished him to beneath the table. Fortunately, I went out shortly thereafter, since there wasn't much left to do to him if he goofed up one more time.



Food is also a good way to reinforce rank. You can position bowls of food by the Dalmutis, but they're prone to sharing. It's much better to have food nearby, so the Dalmutis can send their Peons scurrying off to get some for them. Usually the Lesser Peon gets to fetch food and drink, since the Greater Peon is busy shuffling and dealing between hands.



Greater Dalmutis often tinker with the rules. During one game, instead of saying "pass," we were required to name a fruit or vegetable. The game slowed to a crawl as people had to wrack their brains for a fruit or vegetable that hadn't been named. The player who'd inflicted this on us was renamed "The Great Del Monte."

Merchants are often swept into the game and obey the Dalmutis slavishly. However, there isn't anything in the rules that says people have to do any of the things the Dalmutis decree. Merchants may ignore the Dalmutis' requests. That keeps the Greater Dalmuti well-behaved. Peons, needless to say, usually can't get away with this civil disobedience. The other thing that keeps the Dalmutis from getting too carried away (usually) is the fact that no Dalmuti lasts forever.

Keep an eye out for new and interesting ways to make a distinction between the high and the low. Perhaps have the Great Ones wear robes, or put the Peons in the hot sunlight. Are some of the chairs wobbly? You know who sits there. Costume jewelry or pendants can mark status. Playing the "Great Dalmuti" card might require a little dance. Make the Peons sing if they get the lead. And so on and so forth.

Anyway, you get the picture. You can go overboard, so the game itself is buried in the silliness, but that's not necessarily a bad thing as long as it's fun. The thing you want to avoid is just sitting around a table, calling out numbers and saying "pass" on occasion. Why just play **The Great Dalmuti** when you could play "**Dalmuti** With Hats"?



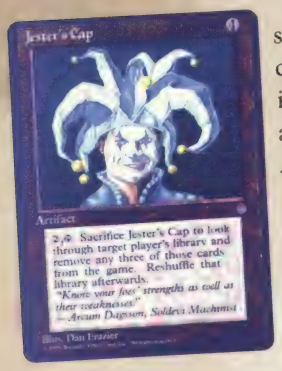


The Diviner

by J.M. White

By the time you read this, the facets of Dominia revealed in Ice Age will have been fully scrutinized. As I write, the first prices for single Ice Age cards have found their way to us.

Keep in mind that the top ten will probably have already changed as card popularity is fully established, although Jester's Mask and Jester's Cap will likely remain as the top cards of the set.



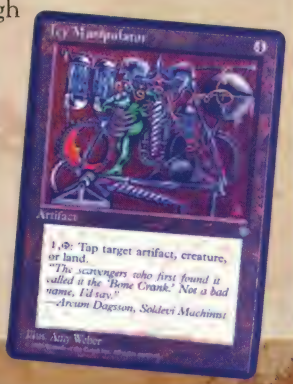
Back to *Fourth Edition*—the secondary market changes caused by the rotation of cards into the basic set seriously affected the value of the *Antiquities* expansion and brought into question the likelihood that the secondary market value of *The Dark* and *Legends* would be greatly affected by the release of *Chronicles*. What is interesting is that as soon as *Chronicles* comes out, a huge percentage of all of the **Magic: The Gathering** cards ever printed will currently be in print: 383 in *Ice Age*, 378 in *Fourth Edition*, 187 in *Fallen Empires*, and over 100 in *Chronicles*. That's more than a thousand cards! This is pretty cool; two people who randomly meet and play might not have any of the same cards in their decks (other than land).

Antiquities prices dropped over the last month as hot cards like Coral Helm, Clockwork Avian, and Colossus of Sardia were readily available in *Fourth Edition* packs. With more than twenty *Antiquities*, fifty *Legends*, and thirty *The Dark* cards, the release of *Fourth Edition* made critical changes to the secondary market.

Clearly, the secondary market has become an important aspect of trade in the trading card game industry; outcry from retail stores was loud after the release of *Fourth Edition* and prices for unopened product declined with the anticipation of the *Chronicles* set. The relationship of single card sales and the value of a set still lies with the playability of certain cards and availability clearly sets the price. Shortages of *Fourth Edition* and *Ice Age* cards have caused temporary inflation in unopened materials and single cards. Prices will settle again to retail or below as soon as supply meets demand, which might not be until February for *Ice Age*. Collectors beware—although prices will look solid on these new sets, the number of cards printed will not be determined until WotC stops printing *Ice Age* and *Chronicles*. The print run may be so large by that time that the cards may only be worth the paper they're printed on.



As with other games, single cards appear for sale in the secondary market only if the game has an adequate supply of cards for trading and a solid following of players who want to buy cards to improve their decks, or collectors who want cards to complete sets. Many of the recent releases have not produced strong enough interest in single cards to encourage a retail store to set up stock and price lists for new trading card game singles. Other games which have managed to create single-card interest have faded from the limelight after a short time.



Backgrounds by Sandra Everingham
Illustrations by Dan Frazier and Amy Weber



Star Trek: The Next Generation is perhaps the most widely traded collectible card game, next to **Magic**. Prices for white-bordered ST:TNG are falling because of the lack of support for the game. Black-bordered card prices have also fallen drastically over the past few months. **Star Wars** is being awaited with great anticipation by both retailers and collectors.

So that leaves us with about twenty products to be released this summer and only a limited supply of available cash to buy them (at the wholesale level), due mainly to lack of supply of **Magic** product and falling card prices on some sets. The industry is volatile, waiting for the next "hit" which never seems to arrive. Although **Rage** has exceeded expectations so far, the August unlimited **Rage** release will tell if it is here to stay. As far as dollars go, there is still only one **Magic: The Gathering**. However, the new contenders are getting stronger and bolder. With the freeze-up of *Ice Age*, there are lots of windows for consumer attention to wander to new games.

The near future holds too little **Magic: The Gathering** and too many rushed releases. With *Ice Age* starter decks in some stores at $17.95, and nothing in other stores, many retailers are unhappy. Retailers are showing very little enthusiasm for ordering anything other than **Magic** products and **Star Trek/Star Wars** black-bordered product. Everyone is optimistic, however, and many think another big success can occur.

The comic industry (Marvel, Comic Images, Comico, Calibre, WildStorm), sports card industry (Upper Deck, Fleer), non-sports card industry (FPG, Cardz), and the book publishing field (Brady Games, Harper Collins) are all trying their hand at trading card games. Most seem to be plunging in, rather than learning the field, and many of the first games have the potential to be mega-flops.

The non-sports card companies, so far, seem the most with it. As for the comic companies, if I were to make a generalization I would say that they are not giving a lot of attention to producing a well-designed card (i.e. placing information well), making eye-pleasing cards, or doing enough to make a good game. Instead, some have decided that what matters the most, by far, is what comic characters are featured on their cards. The non-game companies don't appear to realize just how hard it is to design a very good game, let alone a great one like **Magic: The Gathering**... but some are working hard, so we'll wait and see.

Until we return to the *Homelands*, may your Carrion Ants be worth $40 and your Elder Dragons stay safe from those who would chronicle them...

J.M. White is Editor of Scrye: Guide to Collectible Card Games. Letters and questions can be mailed to : 30617 US Hwy 19 N, Suite 700, Palm Harbor, FL 34684.



Ice Age expansion for Magic: The Gathering Preliminary Top Ten

1. Jester's Cap
2. Jester's Mask
3. Icy Manipulator
4. Ghostly Flame
5. Marton Stromgald
6. Polar Kraken
7. Seraph
8. Enduring Renewal
9. General Jarkeld
10. Hecatomb

Illustrations by Randy Gallegos, and Mark Poole

DESIGNERS NOTES & REPORTS

ON COLLECTABLE TRADING CARD GAMES

compiled by Allen Varney and Jeff Lin

In the last few months, the number of trading card games has skyrocketed—and so has the volume of information about them. In order to present as much of this information as possible, we've changed the format for this section. Now organized by topic rather than by company, this section will give you the latest on new games and expansions, as well as more in-depth profiles of some upcoming releases.

THE WATERS RISE IN AUGUST

Each August, new games flood the huge GenCon® Game Fair in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. This time around, the torrent of trading card games attains Biblical proportions. Will these games, all due this fall, make it onto a handy ark before they drown?

Battlelords™ (New Millenium, Albany, NY): This 332-card science-fiction game derives from the *Battlelords of the 23rd Century* roleplaying game by Optimus Design Systems. Players assemble battlelords, equipment, matrix cards, and mercenaries to accomplish missions and gain fame on the galactic frontier. (Contact: myaks@aol.com.)

The Crow™ (Heartbreaker Hobbies, Folsom, PA): Based on the feature film of the same name, **The Crow** will feature artwork by James O'Barr, as well as previously unreleased shots from the movie. The game will be sold in 15-card "Master Boosters" which contain the complete rules. The initial release consists of around a hundred cards and will be available in September.

Guardians™ (FPG, Pittsburgh, PA): Former TSR staff artist Keith Parkinson co-designed this fantasy game with Luke Peterschmidt. Featuring all-new art by Brom, Don Maitz, Mike Ploog, James Warhola, and Parkinson, **Guardians** casts players as Vierkun (mystics) whose armies try to conquer opponents' strongholds.

Highlander™ (Thunder Castle, Kansas City, MO): The first edition of this sword-fighting game, based on the movies and TV series, was delayed until late July. The 165-card set has three rarities in the first edition; as later editions add more cards, the cards from earlier editions will become less common. **Highlander** cards are only available in 16-card boosters ($2.45), with each booster containing one of four rules cards. (Contact: tcgames@aol.com.)

Kult™ (Heartbreaker Hobbies, Folsom, PA): **Kult** is based on the role-playing game of the same name. In the trading card game, players take on the role of either an Archon or an Angel of Death, and "manipulate the realms of Passion, Dreams, Death and Madness to achieve your specific goals." The initial 268-card release will be sold in 60-card starter decks and 15-card boosters.

Moons of Khadar™ (Valkyrie Games, Hillsboro, OR): On the war-torn planet of Khadar, two to four KlanMasters (players) wage war, using the resources of their "klans" to build ships and weapons, pay mercenaries, and power new technology.

OverPower™ (Fleer Entertainment, Philadelphia, PA): A simple combat game using Marvel Comics superheroes; Marvel Entertainment Group owns Fleer. The 300-card set is sold in six different 62-card starter decks, each with four different characters (206 cards total), and in 15-card booster packs. The boosters contain different cards not in the starters, including an additional twenty-one heroes.

DARK SOVEREIGNS™

by Shawn F. Carnes

When Matt Burke and I first sat down many months ago to discuss the notion of an expansion for **Jyhad**™ (now **Vampire: The Eternal Struggle**™), theme was first and foremost in our minds. Both of us are **Vampire: The Masquerade**™ (White Wolf Games Studios) fanatics; we wanted to create an expansion for the card game that would live up to the standards established by pre-existing source material. What we arrived at when "Bloodletting 1.0" (which would eventually become *Dark Sovereigns*) was down in print made us realize our efforts were not in vain.

The themes we sought were ones of power and its various machinations. Europe represents the birthplace of the Camarilla, and the birthplace of the Machiavellian politics that make up the levels of the Camarilla. The phrase, "Power corrupts; absolute power corrupts absolutely," can be felt when you look at the World of Darkness from Europe's perspective. The eldest of the Princes that rule over European cities are old enough to be considered Methuselahs themselves. Still, they do not hold true power—they are manipulated by forces greater than they can comprehend. These represent the true Dark Sovereigns that manipulate the pawns in the Eternal Struggle.

The cards that make up *Dark Sovereigns* try to capture this feel. A shotgun may be nice, but with a single vote a Caitiff can be burned just for being a Caitiff. The expansion is full of cards that not only increase the stakes of political actions, but also increase the stakes of the manipulation involved with them. The Kindred in Europe do not rely on the brute force so commonly associated with their younger American brethren; political decisions and the Kindred who can successfully control them make up the true power base of Europe. A Methuselah who can control this can control anything.

When "Bloodletting" was finished, we had a grasp of the theme, but the mechanics were loose—they needed to be tight and structured just like the World of Darkness in Europe. This is when Paul Peterson came on board to help turn "Bloodletting" into *Dark Sovereigns.* His gift for mechanics was matched only by his love for the genre. The structure in *Dark Sovereigns* attempts to mirror the one in Europe. Each card represents a tool by which domination and victory can be achieved. The fat was trimmed—as it would be in Europe—and a leaner, meaner expansion came about. The cards increase the game play a notch without breaking the game. The Giovanni, the Ravnos, the Equipment Location cards—they all serve to increase the stakes beyond the scope of just a Camarilla conflict; the Eternal Struggle is global.

Backgrounds by Anthony Petrarca

Dark Sovereigns' focus on power beyond the scope of brute combat hopefully won't turn anyone off; instead, it should turn them on to one of the key elements of Kindred society: power and the need to obtain it. If you are into the Eternal Struggle as Matt, Paul, and I are, you won't be disappointed with the new tools we've provided for you.

Dark Sovereigns
Expansion for **Vampire: The Eternal Struggle**
Publisher: Wizards of the Coast (Renton, WA)
Designers: Matt Burke, Shawn F. Carnes, Paul Peterson
Format: Over 100-card set sold in 15-card booster packs ($2.45)
Release: September 1995
Contact: P.O Box 707, Renton, WA 98057-0707. (206) 624-0933. E-mail: questions@wizards.com. Internet: World Wide Web home page at http://www.wizards.com

SHADOWFIST™

by Robin D. Laws

As designers of **Shadowfist**, José Garcia and I had one major goal: we wanted it to blow up real good. **Shadowfist** is the action movie card game. That meant pacing was our No. 1 consideration: a game of **Shadowfist** had to feel like a wild Hollywood or Hong Kong shoot-'em-up. The rules structure had to reward risk-taking and gratuitous butt-kicking. It had to be fast—and unpredictable.

The victory condition for the game is to control a certain number of feng shui site cards. As you build up your site structure, you gain more power counters per turn; these allow you to bring other cards, like your fighting characters, into play. But bringing out sites gets more costly, and you can't win just by slapping down a final site. This means that the victory condition is interactive: you can't simply race to a win faster than your opponents. Your karate cops, reformed assassins, and weird monsters have to get out there and mix it up with your opponents' characters in order for you to emerge victorious.



Redemption™ (Cactus Games, Chesapeake, VA): Cactus, which created the Milton Bradley game *Scattergories* and many others, publishes this "action-packed collectable trading card game based on the Bible" in late July. "Players use their Biblical Heroes to attempt to rescue Lost Souls held prisoner by their opponents' Evil Characters." Cards feature art (some painted, some computer-generated) by Greg Hildebrandt and many others. Relevant scripture references appear on each card. **Redemption** designer Rob Anderson says that Cactus had originally aimed entirely at the Christian bookstore market, but the company has been "overwhelmed" by strong orders from the adventure gaming industry. Many expansions are planned, and there will be **Redemption** milk caps and a CD-ROM version. (Contact: cactusrob@aol.com.)

Shadowfist™ (Daedalus Games, Seattle, WA): See the accompanying designer's notes and the review on p. 104.

Super Nova™ (Heartbreaker Hobbies, Folsom, PA): Players compete to build a space empire and acquire "population potential" points using diplomacy, military force, and economic means. The 165-card set is sold only in 18-card "master boosters" ($2.95), each with a rulebook.

Tempest of the Gods™ (Black Dragon Press, Logan, UT): Scheduled for late July, this 300-plus-card set (based on *Darkurthe Legends* roleplaying game) casts two to six players as avatars of the gods. They draw Strength and Faith from their relics, weapons, spells, miracles, shrines, and temples. You win by destroying or converting your opponents, or by building enough faith to summon your god to the mortal plane. "Playtesters really enjoy the game," says co-designer Colin Murcray. **Tempest** features art by many notable artists (including established **Magic** artists), but Murcray says it won't be "one of those games that just looks good." (Contact: bdpress1@aol.com. Web: http://www.sunrem.com/~bdp/)

EXPANSION UPDATE

Look for new booster series for these games in August:

Blood Wars™ (TSR, Lake Geneva, WI): The third 125-card Escalation Pack is *Powers and Proxies*, a collection of deities from the Outer Planes and the deities' loyal followers.

Doomtrooper™ (Heartbreaker Hobbies, Folsom, PA): *The War Zone* makes cards out of the corporate warfare in the far future background of *The Mutant Chronicles* roleplaying game; $1.60 for an 8-card booster. A player's guide is also due soon.

Flights of Fantasy™ (Destini Productions, Coventry, RI): *Anarchy*, the first expansion set, has 50-plus cards.

Galactic Empires™ (Companion Games, Stamford, NY): *Powers of the Mind*, with 210 cards in four rarities, ships in July. It adds psionics and magic rules as part of **Galactic**'s "Expanding Universe" expansion system. In August comes *Time Gates*, which warps space and time to create chaos. These sets have low print runs, but will be combined in a Universal Edition that becomes the new core game. Companion is also introducing "ultra mega rare" and "Valuable Beyond Belief" cards that can be redeemed for thousands of dollars of the company's products.

Illuminati: New World Order™ (Steve Jackson Games, Austin, TX): *Assassins*, a 100-plus-card expansion by **INWO** designer Steve Jackson, reintroduces the Society of Assassins, the sole remaining Illuminati group from the original *Illuminati* game. Presumably the set also gives rules for the Assassins' favorite activity, neutralizing groups. The German edition of **INWO** is available directly from SJG for $12 per starter or $2.75 per "Booster Packung" (Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760). A new printing of the Unlimited set ships in September. Web page: io.com/sjgames/inwo/.

On The Edge™ (Atlas Games, Northfield, MN): Atlas president John Nephew designed *Arcana*, a 150-plus-card expansion set of Al Amarja's strange secrets: astral conspiracies, psychics, sorcerers, and the Center for Paranormal Control.

Rage™ (White Wolf, Atlanta, GA): *The Umbra* covers the spirit world seen often in the **Werewolf** roleplaying game. This 90-card-plus limited edition expansion features new enemies and new characters. It will also include quests, a new card type. *The Umbra* will be sold in 12-card booster packs ($1.95) and should be available in August.

SimCity™ (Mayfair Games, Chicago, IL): The first expansion covers Mayfair's home turf. *Chicago* cards are sold in starter-size decks, not booster packs. Each deck will contain all 120 cards of the expansion and will retail for $15. According to the company, *Chicago* is a stand-alone expansion, playable as is for up to four people. The expansion will be available in September.

Star Trek™ (Decipher, Norfolk, VA): *Q Continuum* , a set of about 121 cards sold in fifteen-card boosters, focuses on the omnipotent and annoying *Next Generation* character Q. All **Star Trek** expansions are released in a black-bordered limited edition, followed within a few weeks by an unlimited white-bordered version. Parker Brothers is releasing an introductory **Star Trek** box with two "stacked" sixty-card decks.

Ultimate Combat!™ (Ultimate Games, San Jose, CA): *The Ancient Fighting Arts of China* includes creature styles, northern Shaolin, southern Shaolin, kung fu, tai chi, and shuai chao, all in 123 cards. Web page: www.ultimate-games.com/~shimban/.

Vampire: The Eternal Struggle™ (Wizards of the Coast, Renton, WA): *Dark Sovereigns*, the first expansion for **Vampire** (formerly **Jyhad**), introduces two new clans and many vampires of Europe. See the design notes in this section and "WotC News" elsewhere in this issue.

Wyvern™ (U. S. Games, Stamford, CT): *Phoenix* may sound like it's a supplement for **SimCity**, but the 90-card set actually offers new mythic creatures, gods, and rules for hidden and intercept actions. Designer Mike Fitzgerald is also working on two licensed card games based on the *Peanuts* comic strip, *Peanuts Comic Strip Card Game* and *Charlie Brown Plays Baseball.*

PREVIEWS

Gridiron™ (Precedence, Tempe, AZ)

This "gritty, smash-in-the-mouth, blood and mud, down and dirty" football card game, jointly published with the printer Upper Deck, is due in mid-October. Players assemble a team of fictitious players (rated by such factors as running speed and the severity of injuries they inflict), then choose a "playbook" of running and passing plays represented by cards. "Play is fast and very action-oriented," says co-designer David Hewitt, "but it plays like a real football game. It's simpler to learn than **Magic**, but difficult to master." **Gridiron**'s intended audience is players of sports games such as *Strat-O-Matic Football*, but Hewitt says the game offers "something for everyone."

Heresy: Kingdom Come™ (Last Unicorn Games, Harrisburg, PA)

The employees at Last Unicorn, all four of them, are finishing up this future/cyberpunk/apocalyptic card game for release in September. "Retailers advised us that we'd get a lot more attention by waiting until after 'the wave,'" says Christian Moore, who co-designed **Heresy** with Owen Seyler and Matt Sturm.

Not related to Last Unicorn's innovative *Aria* roleplaying system, **Heresy** was originally designed as an RPG setting, which should come out within the next year. Players become "fallen angels, virtual prophets, and chromeopathic dreamwalkers" in a ruined future world, where they try to collect akasha (spiritual power) and convert it into tau (energy). With sufficient tau you can stabilize the diseased Matrix of cyberspace and rebuild the gate to the Imperium (heaven). The game is "definitely more complex than **Magic**, maybe on the level of **On The Edge**," says Moore. The two-player game is good, and it works well with up to five or six players, when play takes on "a definite political aspect."

Although we wanted **Shadowfist** games to be fast and furious, there is such a thing as too fast! The interactivity of the victory condition allowed us to avoid the bane of trading card games, the first-turn win. And, for that matter, second- and third-turn wins.

We also used card draw to keep the pace blasting along. At the beginning of each turn, you draw enough cards to fill your hand up to six. That means that you always have a large number of options, and a better chance of being ready for whatever wacky stunt your opponents try to play on you.

A generous discard rule allows you to cycle through your deck and get to the cards you need to deal with the situation at hand; this makes it worthwhile to stock your deck with counter cards that can radically reverse the direction of a game. We've also built in protection against bum shuffles. Since there's no room to breathe easy in a **Shadowfist** game, we needed to make sure that everyone starts with the balance of cards they need for the crucial escalation phase, those first few turns when the foundation of a winning game is laid. It's no fun losing a game just because your fundamental building block cards—in this case, your feng shui sites and low-cost characters—just happen to have sunk to the bottom of your deck like so many soggy Rice Krispies™.



We also tried to ensure that skill in the course of the game meant just as much to successful play as deck-building. You have plenty of options in launching attacks. You can attack sites or characters, and can keep attacking during a turn as long as you have active characters and you haven't already failed to damage the target of an attack.

To excel at **Shadowfist**, you have to choose your moves carefully. If you haven't hit them yet, those enemy feng shui sites are face-down, and they may conceal some nasty surprises. In multiplayer games, you never know whether third parties will intercept your attacks, or help you take out the front-runner. As defender, you become increasingly overextended as you accumulate feng shui sites. Consequently, you can go from being a hair away from world domination to the ash heap of history in a single trip around the table.

The element of surprise was a big concern during individual card design. Each of the major **Shadowfist** groups—cinematic heroes, fanatical shaolin monks, twisted scientists, evil sorcerers, and secret masters of the modern world—have basic, common cards that can turn a game on its head.

Together, all these elements create the sense of edge-of-your-seat suspense that smells like popcorn and swells like a rip-roaring soundtrack score. I can't count the number of times I thought I had an air-tight, fiendish plan to spring on my opponents—and found, by my next turn, that conditions had changed so much that it was no longer even relevant.

As creator of the world the game is set in, I wanted to present material that was instantly recognizable and accessible, but also filled in with cool new details. **Shadowfist** was built with a narrative continuity in mind from day one. You'll see it unfold in future products like the introductory *Combat in Kowloon*™ boxed set, the *Netherworld*™ expansion, and even in the cards that get cycled out between our Limited and Standard Editions. Those who want to pursue the narrative in depth can keep an eye out for the ***Shadowfist** Players' Guide* book, and *Feng Shui*™, a roleplaying game that lets you play out the secret war in another exciting game medium.

I'd stick around and give away more secrets of **Shadowfist**, but I'm afraid I have an appointment to help some maverick cops and masked avengers take out a nest of hopping vampires. See you at the Grove of Willows!

Shadowfist
Publisher: Daedalus Games (Seattle, WA)
Designers: José Garcia and Robin Laws
Format: Approximately 300-card set in four rarities, 60-card starter decks ($8.50); 15-card Shadowpacks ($2.50).
Release: Available now. In September, Daedalus plans to release a 140-card expansion, *Netherworlds*, to be sold in 12-card Shadowpacks ($2.50).
Contact: Daedalus Games,
e-mail: jgarcia@io.org.



Heresy uses the extra-long card format seen in artist cards and in Mayfair's **SimCity** card game. Moore says he was surprised to find that there is no problem in shuffling such cards, and Last Unicorn got a positive response from distributors and retailers about the larger size. The cards feature three-inch-high paintings by comics and fantasy artists such as Bernie Wrightson,.Michael Kaluta (who did the covers for *Aria*), James O'Barr (*The Crow*), Brom, Tom Kidd, Barclay Shaw, Timothy Bradstreet, Rick Berry, and others. Berry is the game's graphic designer.

Heresy will be sold in sixty-card starters and fifteen-card boosters. There are over 375 cards in four rarities. It ships in September. (Contact: Monomyth@aol.com.)

Legends of the Five Rings™ (Alderac Entertainment Group, Ontario, CA)

The publishers of *SHADIS* magazine are planning this Asian feudal fantasy card game for mid-September. In a mythical world based on Japanese and Chinese mythology, six clans compete for Honor by winning battles or political intrigues; the winner becomes heir to the dying Emperor. Designer Dave Williams says **Legends of the Five Rings** mixes historical Asian elements with fantasy along the lines of roleplaying games like *Bushido* and the *Oriental Adventures* campaign setting for AD&D®. The game is for two to six players; two experienced players can play in thirty minutes to an hour. Williams says the game represents an elaborate story that will unfold in expansion sets and, "come hell or high water," will end at GenCon 1997.

The 300-plus-card set, with three rarities, will be sold in sixty-card starters ($7.95) and fifteen-card boosters ($2.45). The cards, printed and sorted by Yaquinto in Dallas, are plastic-coated for easier shuffling. (Contact: JollyGood@aol.com.)

Star Wars® Customizable Card Game™ (Decipher, Inc., Norfolk, VA)

In an April release on the Internet, Decipher president Warren Holland said the company plans a fall release for this card game licensed from Lucasfilm. The game, developed by the same team that did Decipher's **Star Trek** game, covers all three **Star Wars** films "plus some other stuff too." The basic game deals with the first film in the series, *A New Hope*. Expansion sets will be based on *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Return of the Jedi*. "Over 1,000 cards are currently in development for release over the next two and a half years." Holland said Decipher has also enlisted West End Games, publisher of the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game*, as consultants.

Star Wars cards will use still photos from the movies, taken from new color-corrected prints Decipher commissioned from Lucasfilm's original negatives—"the first licensee in *Star Wars* history to go back to the original masterpieces. High resolution drum scans will transform the individual film positives into digital images. The images will be enhanced and characters isolated ...using state-of-the-art computer graphics. (Look out, Forrest Gump!) Decipher also has access to the entire Lucasfilm library of character shots, matte paintings, props, etc."

Holland concludes, "The last bit of information I can reveal is that playable decks will generally be easier to assemble than in many other [card games], but there is one component on this point that I cannot mention yet. Also, many of the main characters in *Star Wars* appear as common cards in **Star Wars: CCG**. Cards which enhance the power of these selected characters are usually uncommon and rare, but there is a balance. The most expensive deck is not always guaranteed to be the winning deck."

(Contact: DCustServe@decipher.com. Web: www.decipher.com)

If you have a game that you'd like to see listed here, send information to The Duelist, *P.O. Box 707, Renton WA, 98057, or via e-mail to duelist@wizards.com.*

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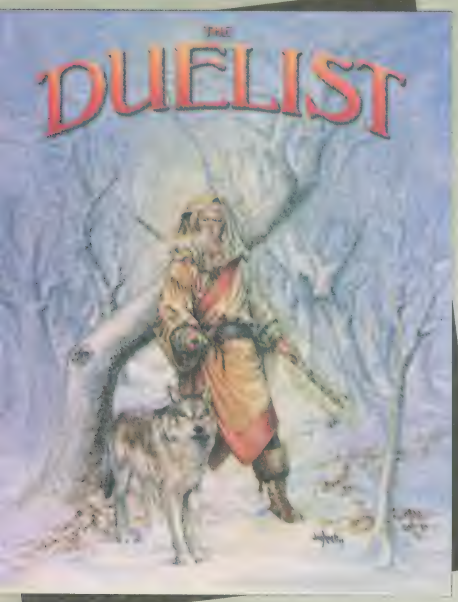
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ON THE TOWN WITH SIM CITY: THE CARD GAME

A review by Allen Varney
[a.varney1@genie.geis.com]

Draw a card, play a card, score... "I'm planting a new stretch of forest."

Draw, play, score: "Now that we have a high school and college, let's build a grade school."

"Look, here in the heart of town: a mountain!"

SimCity®: The Card Game™ from Mayfair Games can create bizarre effects in play. But when you think about it, a game about building a city is bizarre to start with. Sure, the 1989 Maxis computer game **SimCity®**, by Will Wright, got us used to the idea, when it singlehandedly established simulations (of anything besides planes, that is) as a category of computer entertainment. You marked residential, commercial, and industrial zones on random terrain; you watched as your simulated citizens ("sims") turned the place into a thriving metropolis; you coped with disasters ranging from earthquakes to giant monsters. It was neater than electric trains, and the sequel game, **SimCity 2000®** (by Wright, Fred Haslam, and many others), is to the same degree neater than **SimCity**.

Even so, the notion that it's fun to build cities is strange. You never really win. People call **SimCity** a "god game," but in fact you have no power over what the little wretches put in the zones you carefully lay out. And if you create a perfect place to live, guess what? You can't live there.

How much more bizarre to see a computer simulation turned into a trading card game. To see the alleged omnipotence of **SimCity** give way to a struggle over shared resources. In short, to play **SimCity: The Card Game**.

Draw, Play, Score....

In moving from computer screen to card table, SimCity has been transformed almost beyond recognition. Very little beyond the name and the subject carry over; you certainly needn't know the computer version to play. Instead of zoning land, as is done in the computer game, players gradually build from settlement to metropolis by placing blocks. Each block card has a photograph of a building or terrain type. Some blocks provide sims, others require them, and many are connected by roads, rails, and power lines. Each block placed scores its card value plus various bonuses. The first player to make $250 wins.

Each card is color-coded by phase of the game (settlement, village, city, or metropolis) and by zone. Zones include the residential, commercial, and industrial types from the computer game, plus agricultural, governmental, city services, and special cards. Some cards bring disasters like floods, tornadoes, and terrorist attacks—the usual urban experiences.

SimCity cards are printed (on excellent stock) and sorted at Carta Mundi, the Belgian company that prints **Magic: The Gathering™**. Many of the photos on the cards show homes, stores, farms, and terrain in central Illinois (Mayfair is based in Chicago). Other photos come from public domain CD-ROM collections. Some look beautiful, others pedestrian, and few would be exciting to a collector. I foresee confusion among players who try to collect complete sets, for they must locate numerous cards with different game statistics but identical names: half a dozen Farms, as many Barns, unknown numbers of Mountains, and so on. Even the unique cards lack exciting names. Can you imagine a heated trading session over "723 W. Ninth St."? Collectors may be frustrated by the large number of **SimCity** promotional cards available only from obscure sources, such as independent distributors and small-circulation magazines.

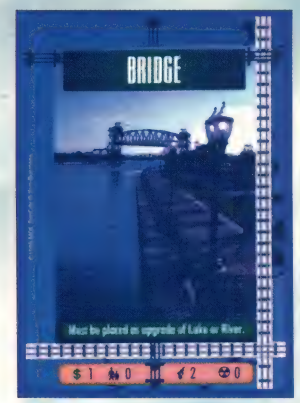
Perhaps collectors will enjoy the long cards, booster-pack novelties that extend twice the width of standard cards. Buy a booster and you can outfit your city with an enormous structure (Telecommunications HQ, Regional Grade School) or perhaps a unique monument (Basilica de Guadalupe, Le Moulin Rouge). But you only get one long card per booster, so building a deck of them will be expensive. Not only that, the long cards mean trouble if you want to carry a deck around in your pocket. Still, it's the only way to go if you want to build the Great Pyramids outside your city in central Illinois.

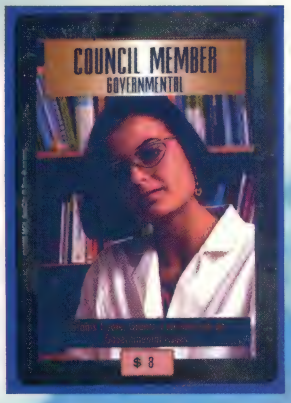
Draw, Search, Search...Play! Score!

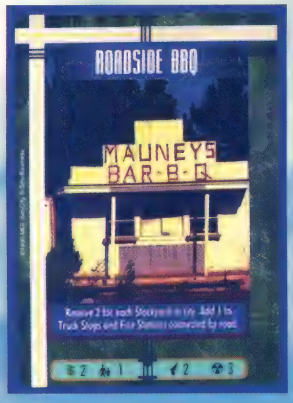
In the standard version of **SimCity: The Card Game**, all players play from the same deck, so play takes on the nature of a competitive puzzle. Clever zoning rules, which grant bonuses for forming groups of blocks with the same zone, encourage structure in the growing city. The absorbing search for maximum value is suitable for grown-ups, children, or mixed-age groups. This also makes for a good solitaire variant, the first truly interesting solitaire version of any trading card game.

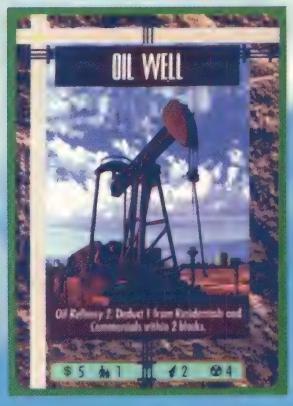
The mayor represents another break with the computer game. (Yes, the mayor on the card is Mayfair president and **SimCity** designer Darwin Bromley.) In city politics, money is power, but in **SimCity**, power is power. The first player to place a power plant in a growing village starts the city phase and becomes mayor, with the power to break ties in votes on rezoning (that is, placing a card atop a previously placed card). Also voting are city council members, available for purchase at $5 apiece in three versions: Normal, Special Interest, and Corrupt. You can even hold elections for council chairman and governor.

Backgrounds by Mark Tedin









These rules are welcome because they provide almost the only player interaction in the game.

Aside from their obvious political dimension, the city council rules also offer a clever reason to include disasters in the deck: the mayor pays for them! The prospect of underwriting the bill for a flood, earthquake, tornado, or the like is all that can drive an unpopular mayor to resign. Then the office is auctioned, proving that money is power after all.

Draw, Search, Search, Search....

Play a card, score it, repeat. **SimCity** play quickly grows repetitive. You never have to weigh, for instance, whether to attack. In small games, where rezoning is not always an issue, interaction between players almost vanishes. You crane your neck over the layout, studying; the bigger the city grows, the longer you study. More than once I wished for an automatic way to calculate values. In other words, I wished **SimCity** could be a computer game.

Deck design is elementary, a balancing of high-value settlement homes with high-value village and city blocks. Although all the cards of a given type (Farm, Mountain) are balanced against one another by property values, services, and crime, some card types are clearly better than other types. Never play a Barrens, for example, when you can play a Plains—unless you're planning to build the Great Pyramids outside the city limits.

A tuned deck also minimizes interest in the game's early stages. You can select settlement and village sites that move you ahead to the more lucrative city stage quickly, given a lucky draw; with a bad draw you simply stare dully until these vital cards finally appear. Design strategies—commercial versus industrial, and so on—differ from one another, but I find the differences uninteresting. In other trading card games, your deck is a little machine that you pit against rival machines. In **SimCity**, everyone draws from the same deck, so that element of contest is gone. There is a multi-deck "Dueling Suburbs" variant, but it amounts to simultaneous solitaire games.

These quibbles are based on personal preferences—I can easily imagine that some players will love exactly these features of **SimCity**—but I have two big complaints that aren't so easily dismissed. First, **SimCity: The Card Game** doesn't effectively conjure the feel of a city. When your layout is done, you aren't looking at buildings, as in the computer game, but at a photo grid of Illinois.

Perhaps imagination can transform this into a community, as one conjures a roleplaying character from a string of numbers and pictures. But the more serious complaint about **SimCity** is that it need not have been a trading card game. The cards aren't exciting for collectors, the large universe of cards doesn't greatly enhance play, and deck design offers only minimal interest. **SimCity** would have worked fine as a boxed four-player game with, say, 120 standard and 60 long cards. In this incarnation, it's obviously capitalizing on the current trading card game craze—and contributing to the glut.

The Final Score

SimCity: The Card Game is original, clever, and needs only a couple of starter decks (thirty cards per player). You need not buy more cards to tune your deck. Many players can play using just one player's cards, and the game is especially good as a solitaire game. Fans of the computer version won't find enough of a resemblance to inspire their interest, but the card game is decent in its own right. Its faults derive mainly from its inappropriate format.

In recent months, I've wanted to call all these card game publishers and shout, "Stop, you fools, before it's too late!" Oversaturated with games rushed to the shelves, the market cannot sustain itself. If the collapse carries **SimCity: The Card Game** down with it, I hope Mayfair re-releases the game as a stand-alone box in the same line as its family card games, such as *Family Business*™ and *Express*™. It would be a shame to lose this one.

SIMCITY®: THE CARD GAME™

PUBLISHER: Mayfair Games **FORMAT:** 517-card release in four rarities; sixty-card starter deck (thirty-six common, nineteen uncommon, five rare), $8.50; fifteen-card booster (eight common, five uncommon, one rare, one double-width ultrarare), $2.50. For one or more players (best with one, or four and up); playing time 45 minutes and way up **DESIGN:** Darwin Bromley, Louis Rexing, and Tom Wham **DEVELOPMENT:** Darwin Bromley **CARD LAYOUT AND DESIGN:** Chris Vande Voort

RAGE™

reviewed by Rick Swan

Publisher: White Wolf, Inc. (Clarkston, GA)
Format: 60-card starter set, $7.95; 12-card booster pack, $1.95
For 2-5 players; playing time 30–90 minutes
Design: Mike Tinney and Stephan Wieck with Mark Rein•Hagen, Bill Bridges, and Andrew Greenberg
Editing: Cynthia Summers, Robert Hatch, and Erin Kelly
Art direction: Chris McDonough and Richard Thomas
Graphic design: Chris McDonough, Michael Scott Cohen, Lawrence Snelly, John E. Park, Shaggy Dixon, Aileen Miles, Kathleen Ryan, and Matt Milberger

Let's get this straight up front: **Rage**™ has no more to do with **Werewolf: the Apocalypse**™ (the roleplaying game on which **Rage** is based) than SPELLFIRE™ has to do with **Advanced Dungeons & Dragons**®. Sure, **Rage** borrows imagery, terminology, and concepts from **Werewolf**. And sure, it shares the same gritty, doom-filled setting. But a card game can't begin to capture a roleplaying game's narrative drive and character detail, any more than a video baseball game can capture the sensation of smacking a real ball with a real bat. Those expecting **Rage** to duplicate the experience of **Werewolf** should be prepared to have their hearts broken.

What **Rage** does, and does exceedingly well, is emulate the bloody combat encounters inherent in **Werewolf**, but downplayed for expediency. And when I say bloody, I mean spray-the-walls, soak-the-carpet bloody. Unlike the antiseptic space duels of the **Star Trek: The Next Generation**™ collectable card game or the fairy-tale skirmishes of **Wyvern**™, a **Rage** battle has the impact of a meat cleaver in the forehead, as evidenced by combat cards with names like Disembowelment and Entrail Rend. Whenever I walk by the deck, I half expect it to snarl.

Physically and aesthetically, the cards are on par with the best the hobby has to offer. They're sturdy, colorful, and specially coated to resist all manner of stains and spills, so you won't mess them up if you play during an autopsy. The smart layout—title on the top, sandwiched between a pair of identification symbols, a picture panel adjacent to a strip of text, and a few easy-to-read statistics—makes the cards a snap to use. Garish colors, heavy on oranges and reds, give them the lurid appeal of a horror film.

As collector's items, however, they're marginal, owing to the hit-or-miss illustrations. Many are evocative, even creepy, like the nightmarish Black Spiral Dancer, who resembles a skinned gorilla with a tail made of worms. With its fang-stuffed maw, the Mamu werewolf could probably chew through a bank vault. But a lot of them strike me as rush jobs. The Tanzut, presumably one of the more regal werewolves, looks like a ballet-dancing greyhound with its head on backwards. The werewolf on the Dodge card appears to be doing the limbo. Despite the plethora of artists and styles, the gore quotient remains high throughout. Great globs of red spew from a wounded lycanthrope on the Glancing Blow card. The Broken Limb card depicts a shattered bone protruding through the arm of a dog-faced creep (who, strangely, doesn't appear to be all that upset). The Disembowelment card shows a gloating werewolf holding…well, you figure it out.

A sixty-card starter deck (get at least two of them; each player needs his own) contains three types of cards: character, combat, and sept. Character cards represent individual werewolves; one side shows the ancestral form (called the breed), the other shows the semi-human manifestation (the crinos). Each card features ratings for Rage (the character's ferocity), Health (the amount of damage he can tolerate), and Gnosis (his spiritual power, useful when wielding magic). Combat cards portray various offensive and defensive options, including bites, swipes, and blocks. Sept cards depict everything else: weapons, spells (called gifts, in **Rage**-speak), allies, enemies, and events.

Card text is relatively sparse, which is too bad, considering that the meticulously detailed setting is one of **Werewolf: the Apocalypse**'s strongest features; **Rage**, unfortunately, provides only a few tantalizing glimpses. There seems to be no rhyme or reason to which character cards include background descriptions. Scratches-at-Fleas' card tells us he's part dingo, and he's at home in the city or the outback. But Eyes-of-Frost's card tells us nothing personal at all, only that he can banish a Pack Totem card. And Tanzut's card has only a single word: Kailindo. What's Kailindo, you ask? I wouldn't have known either if White Wolf hadn't sent me ten pages of errata and answers to Frequently Asked Questions. (It's a form of martial arts practiced by werewolves.)

In fact, if I were a new **Rage** player and unfamiliar with **Werewolf**, the first thing I'd do is contact White Wolf for the latest errata packet. It's not that you can't figure out the game from the rulebook; it's just that it's more work than it ought to be, thanks to the ambiguities and omissions. The quick-start guidelines, which claim to "provide all the information you need to get a simple game up and running" are all but useless, as they neglect to define key terms like alpha and moot, and fail to clarify the differences between the breed and crinos forms. The glossary—vital in a game with this much oddball lingo—is frustratingly incomplete; there's no entry for kinfolk (a relative of a werewolf who isn't a full-blooded werewolf himself) or sept (a group of werewolves who live near a sacred site called a caern—I got that from the roleplaying book). I had to consult the Frequently Asked Questions sheet to figure out how to run moots (they're votes called at werewolf meetings, whose outcomes affect subsequent battles) and how to use rites (they're like gifts, only harder to execute). The rulebook needs a rewrite, real bad, real soon.

Backgrounds by Amy Weber

But if you manage to hack your way through the rules, you'll find **Rage** surprisingly elegant, a smooth-playing thrill machine with intuitive mechanics and carnage galore. Players compete for renown (**Rage**-speak for victory points) by destroying opposing werewolves, performing rites, and garnering enough votes to pass moots. The first side to tally a predetermined amount of renown—which approximates the total renown of all characters in the deck—wins.

To get a game underway, players choose the characters they wish to represent, then divide their decks into combat and sept stacks. Five cards are drawn from the sept deck to form a hand. Play follows a rigid five-phase sequence, beginning with the redraw, during which cards from the hand may be discarded and replaced with new ones. Next comes the regeneration phase, during which werewolves and some of their associates may heal a bit of damage. The equip/ally phase allows players to deploy equipment, ally, and enemy cards from their sept hand; equipment and allies boost a friendly werewolf's combat efficiency, while enemies earn renown for anyone who slays them. The moot phase follows, in which players produce as many moot cards as they wish, with each active character voting pro or con as desired by the owner. Moots that pass take effect immediately; moots include Silver Record (a werewolf's exploits become legend, earning the owner a pair of victory points), Ritual Challenge (two werewolves are compelled to engage in a three-round battle), and Winter Wolf (a werewolf of renown six or higher is removed from play).

The combat phase, which completes a turn, begins with players drawing five cards from their combat decks. Each player chooses an alpha—a character who'll be the primary combatant—and moves him to the center of the table. During each round of combat, players may play combat actions, such as Flesh Wound and Dodge, or combat events, like Pack Defense (allies may assist in the attack) and No Escape (the attacker may not withdraw). Alternately, they may activate any gift cards that affect combat, such as Spirit of the Frey (affected werewolf always strikes first) and True Fear (opponent can't play any combat cards in the subsequent round). When the amount of damage equals or exceeds the character's Rage rating, the owning player flips the card to reveal the character's crinos form and a new set of statistics. When the damage exceeds the Health rating, the character dies. Combat rounds continue until all characters on one side are dead, the attacker retreats, or the attacker runs out of combat cards. If the defender runs out of combat cards, he's out of luck; unless a special card enables his characters to escape, they must stay put and take their punishment—not a pretty sight.

Combat is vicious, quick, and intense—it's like being locked in a room with a pack of rabid dogs. Attackers have few restrictions on whom they can target; a werewolf may attack any opponent on the table merely by issuing a challenge. Gifts may be used at any time, in any amount; there are no resources to deplete other than the cards themselves. A terrific rule for frenzy simulates the werewolf's bloodlust and superhuman will. When a character becomes frenzied, he receives a number of extra combat cards equal to his Rage score and continues to fight until he expends all of his cards—he keeps going even if he's dead. Frenzied or not, all werewolves are automatically active; free-for-alls involving every werewolf on the table are not only possible, but probable, given the right cards. Enemies, such as the Black Spiral Dancer, the Fomori (a drooling monstrosity with eyeballs in its throat), and the Hogling (Porky Pig from hell), add yet another layer of violence, as they can pop up at any time to ravage random werewolves. To prevent **Rage** from succumbing to B-movie hokum, the designers have drenched it in mysticism. Every werewolf, for instance, has an auspice symbol denoting the phase of the moon under which he was born, defining his role in the community. Spiritually-evolved werewolves may commune with a ghost realm called the Umbra (which the first expansion set addresses in detail).

The compromises necessary to keep the game simple are occasionally troubling. During the regeneration phase, for example, each injured werewolf may remove the damage card with the lowest value. But consider: if Werewolf A has a pair of two-point damage cards, and Werewolf B has a single four-point damage card, Werewolf A recovers only two points, while Werewolf B recovers four. A crafty player can exploit this inequity by attacking first with a low-level damage card, thus limiting the amount of damage the victim will be able to recover. (For example, I'll hit my enemy with a one-point card before I make my five-point assault; when he regenerates, he'll only be able to recover one point). And it's nice that an attacking werewolf can challenge any opponent on the table, but why would he? Unless he's nuts, he'll usually target a weaker opponent; however, in almost every situation, the opponent is free to decline—and if the opponent declines, the attacker forfeits his attack for the current turn. If the attacker targets a stronger opponent, the opponent can probably presume the attacker is concealing a deadly card or two—and unless the opponent's nuts, he'll decline the challenge. Also, decks included enough characters to play the game, but not enough to give me a good look at all the tribes (yeah, I know—buy the boosters, but still…).

No doubt about it—**Rage** aims at the animal in you. Subtlety is not its strong suit, nor is tastefulness; the gory combat cards will make your grandma swoon. But it's undeniably exciting, a trip to another world where brute force counts more than brains, where ordinary humans are as incidental as insects. With its evocative imagery and exotic language, **Rage** oozes atmosphere, boasting one of the richest backgrounds in all of card gaming. Note, too, that it requires no tokens, dice, pencils, or paper; it's one of the few card games in recent memory that's truly self-contained. For seasoned players who make an effort to unravel the rules—and translate the lingo—**Rage** can be riveting, exhausting fun, a mad brawl between blood-crazed psychopaths. If **Star Trek** is a fine wine and **Wyvern** a bag of candy, then **Rage** is red meat. Carnivores of all persuasions should consider that a recommendation.







a review by Allen Varney
(a.varney1@genie.geis.com)

SHADOWFIST™

Publisher: Daedalus Games (Seattle, WA)

Format: 270+-card set in four rarities; sixty-card starter deck, $8.50; fifteen-card Shadowpack, $2.50. For two or more players (best with 4–5); playing time twenty to seventy minutes.

Design: José Garcia and Robin D. Laws

Art Direction and Graphic Design: Jesper Myrfors

Artists: Rob Alexander, Susan Alexander, Julie Baroh, Edward Beard, Jr., Melissa Benson, Liz Danforth, Kaja Foglio, Phil Foglio, Dan Frazier, Daniel Gelon, Quinton Hoover, Heather Hudson, Richard Kane Ferguson, Mike Kimble, Nicola Leonard, Anson Maddocks, Jeff Menges, Ken Meyer, Jr., Jesper Myrfors, Margaret Organ-Kean, Mark Poole, Ron Rousselle, Douglas Shuler, Brian Snoddy, Mark Tedin, NéNé Thomas, Richard Thomas, Susan van Camp, Anthony Waters, L. A. Williams, Kumi Yamashita.

Haiiii-yah! Hah! Urgh! Oof! Aha, I have you now! You have guts, young warrior, but I have the more powerful kung fu! Okay, pal, this time the gloves are off!

The hordes of the underworld feast even now on your ancestral holdings, impertinent one! Take that, Buro slimebag! My sacrifice is worth the price, evil one, if I take you with me! The Taming Power of the Underdog, right on at you, scumweeds!

Yum yum, psychic residue!

Shudder, mewling fools, at the incalculable wrath of the Infernal Plague! Talk all you want, ugly, I got a bag full of guns! Foolish stripling, your Invincible Crane Stance means nothing to the Claws of the Tiger!

[Editor: Worked on two pieces today, this **Shadowfist** review and something on Hong Kong movies for the local paper. Been taking a prescription antihistamine for hay fever, long name I can't pronounce, and it's fuzzed my brain. May have saved some of the movie piece in the review file by accident, no time to check. Please fix. Off to doctor now.–AV]

We can all agree that **Shadowfist** is the best trading card game we've seen this year about kung fu masters and maverick cops fighting genetic monstrosities and transformed animal executives.

In this cinematic game of disposable heroes and heavy carnage, five factions from four different eras fight for control of the geomantic *feng shui* sites (Ancestral Tombs, Blessed Orchards, Jagged Cliffs, and Family Restaurants) that ensure victory and good fortune. The factions are the usual lot: everyday heroes (the Dragons) who stumbled onto this secret war and now "aim to make things right for you and me"; nineteenth-century Shaolin monks (the Guiding Hand); mad scientists from the future Buro police state (Architects of the Flesh); the transformed frogs and snakes who run our world (the Ascended); and, of course, ancient sorcerous Chinese eunuchs (the Eaters of the Lotus). You know, the standard cast of every Hong Kong action flick ever made.

Most Americans haven't seen an Asian movie since Bruce Lee's early films. But outside North America, the most popular films in the world are Hong Kong martial-arts and gangster movies—not Bruce Lee's chop-socky hits, not even the stunt-filled action comedies of Jackie Chan, but the pedal-to-the-metal, martial arts extravaganzas of Tsui Hark and the gangster apocalypses of John Woo. Outside Chinatowns and college campuses of major cities, few American filmgoers recognize actors like Jet Li, Andy Lau, Maggie Cheung, Brigitte Lin, and (the one, the only) Chow Yun-Fat. Too bad, because these stars make Stallone and Schwarzenegger look like pansies

The committees who produce cookie-cutter Hollywood block-busters say, "I'm not sure about this idea. Let's leave it out." Hong Kong's fearless scriptwriters try anything: "I'm not sure about this idea. Oh well, throw it in." Hard Boiled, Chinese Ghost Story, The Heroic Trio, Iron Monkey, Green Snake, Naked Killer: *these Hong Kong classics barrel along at a smooth 100 mph; lunatic melodrama charges every scene, and life is cheap. If the director doesn't cripple at least five stunt men during filming, he thinks he's not trying hard enough. For sheer zany energy, America hasn't produced anything to match Hong Kong since Marvel Comics in the 1960s. American film made its closest approach in John Carpenter's neglected 1986 slugfest,* Big Trouble in Little China.

Abominations and Snake Demons! Prototype X and Chromosome Screamer! Fong Sai Yuk! Big Trousers Tsien! The Battlechimp Potemkin!

The imaginations of José Garcia and Robin D. Laws shone forth in fecund glory in last year's *Nexus: The Infinite City*™, an excellent roleplaying game from Daedalus Games. Daedalus president Garcia and talented freelancer Laws have come through again in **Shadowfist**. This card game actually derives from Daedalus' forthcoming roleplaying game *Feng Shui*™, and the RPG promises to be as rambunctiously creative as *Nexus*. The card game and RPG will share the same continuity; as the world changes in one game, the other will reflect it. However, Garcia points out that card game players need not know either the RPG or the Hong Kong movies it simulates.

Backgrounds by Amy Weber

I haven't seen the *Feng Shui* roleplaying game, nor even a whole deck of the trading card game. This review, based on late playtest rules and preview cards, doesn't address issues of sorting or packaging. The cards look great, with large pictures and readable text. Printed and foil-stamped by Upper Deck in California, **Shadowfist** cards have the varied look and rich, somewhat dark printing of Alpha (or first edition) **Magic: The Gathering**™ cards. This makes sense, given that **Shadowfist**'s art director and graphic designer is Jesper Myrfors (the original art director for **Magic**) and that most of the artists have long **Magic** track records.

Shadowfist's rules are slick, professional, and very complete by the low standards of trading card games. Experienced gamers will appreciate the quick-start summary that begins the rulebook. The text establishes a cinematic tone that the rules strongly develop. Just like a movie, the game establishes its heroes (who cost Power points to summon), their locations and goals (protecting your all-important feng shui sites, which generate Power), and their conflicts (the winner must control six feng shui sites, at least one seized from an opponent). Even the steps of the turn take their names from script-writing jargon: "establishing shot" and "main shot."

In the same way, many **Shadowfist** design mechanics are borrowed from other sources. The placement of feng shui sites in a two-rank grid brings to mind SPELLFIRE: MASTER THE MAGIC™. The card attributes (Site, Weapon, Hood, Vehicle) resemble those of **On the Edge**™, for which Laws designed the *Cut-Ups*™ expansion set. When two players seek control of a unique character or site, the auction rules may remind them of **Jyhad**™, aka **Vampire: The Eternal Struggle**™. As for **Magic: The Gathering**, its clearest resemblance to **Shadowfist** can be seen as soon as you start a fight—and don't think you won't.

After making a few logistical decisions in placing sites, assigning characters to guard them, and playing equipment and event cards, you spend most of your turn fighting. The combat system works smoothly, keeps all players on guard, and offers much interest. Characters fight one on one or in small groups, either at the location they attack or defend or by "intercepting" attacks on another location. Your attacker fights his or her way along a chain of opponents to the target you name. If the character damages the target, you can declare another attack.

In the typical martial arts movie, anybody and everybody can jump into a fight, yet everyone politely waits in line for a round of one-on-one mayhem with the star. When the fists and feet start flying, fighters leap onto roofs and kick up whole rows of tiles; they fight while balanced on rickety poles, they punch through walls just to show off, *they split the earth with impassioned screams—you name it, they break it. By some invisible art that borders on magic, each film establishes a unique internal logic of fighting that the audience buys completely. "Okay, they can jump* this *high, the weapons aren't magical, bad guy can decapitate at twenty yards, check." In the next film, everything changes, yet somehow it all still works.*

The gangster movies, such as John Woo's The Killer, *work differently. They have just two rules: (1) Guns never run out of bullets. (2) You aren't dead until you're shot in the head. A blizzard...? A firehose...? No. Mere words can't convey how much lead flies in these movies. The heroes bleed buckets, but they just grit their teeth and lunge straight into the next scene. In the gangster movies, as in their kung-fu counterparts, only the tough survive.*

Flying Guillotines and Swords of Biting! HAVOK Suits and Arcanowave Pulses! Speedboats! Mutoids! Neutron Bombs!

Shadowfist play is dynamic and highly flavorful, though it's hard to make sense of all its diverse monks, mobsters, mutants, and masked avengers without knowledge of the roleplaying game. The card game works well with two players and even better with four or five. There are no one-turn wins. A game never lasts more than seventy minutes, even in a large group, and games seldom freeze into a standoff as sometimes happens in **Magic**. On almost every turn you have something to do. Play is balanced, in the sense that "the balance of play shifts wildly," says Garcia. "It's the easiest game to come back from an almost certain defeat."

He should have added, "if you know what you're doing." **Shadowfist** is easy to learn but hard to master. Especially in a multi-player game, the wild swings of influence make it hard for the novice (at least this novice) to plan any strategy beyond "attack the leader."

Some viewers find that Hong Kong movies give them a headache. They're bewildered by the frenetic action and jump-cut editing, and they race to keep abreast of the badly translated subtitles and the mulligan stew of plot elements. Viewers without an affinity for the material may lose track of good guys and bad guys, of goals and conflicts. They lean back in their chairs and just let it all wash over them like the surf.

Realpolitik and Assassins in Love! Killing Rains and Whirlwind Strikes! Inexorable Corruption! "Now You've Made Us Mad!" The Final Brawl!

The factions of **Shadowfist** offer many strategies for deck design. The Dragons have great fighters, the Architects' genetic monstrosities are tough, the Ascended control the flow of Power, and so on. Cards are individually balanced, yet their effects dovetail to produce powerful combinations. In one playtest game, I thought I was doing well to give my Orange Monk a Charmed Life, but my opponent munched my Monk and all my Everyday Heroes with an Abomination in an Attack Helicopter. He could have put his Abomination in the still nastier Combat Aircar or Floating Fortress, and backed it up with Disintegrator Rays, Nerve Gas, and the gift that keeps on giving, a Bag Full of Guns.

Shadowfist's rare cards, though not unbalanced, are more powerful and generally cooler than the commons and uncommons. They're expensive to cast and specialized, but they allow potent combinations. The rares also give you unique major characters drawn from the **Shadowfist** roleplaying game: Quan Lo, the Perfect Master; Jack Donovan, Maverick Cop; the Queen of the Ice Pagoda and the King of the Thunder Pagoda; and the formidable Johnny Tso, Heroic Gunman ("Ancient evil sorcerers have invaded his city. Fortunately, he has a bag full of guns.").

If such attractions lure you into buying additional cards, go for the booster packs, because half of each starter deck is devoted to the same assortment of very common basic troops. It should be said, though, that in contrast to many inferior trading card games, **Shadowfist** lets you build a winning deck entirely from common and very common cards. (You might instead wait for the upcoming gift box, which includes two "stacked" decks and a larger rulebook.)

The purist may find these works mere copies of their predecessors, their story elements derivative. Still, their matchless energy draws you in. This sort of action is not for everyone, but if you love atmosphere and heavy fighting without compelling logic, you'll have a terrific time.

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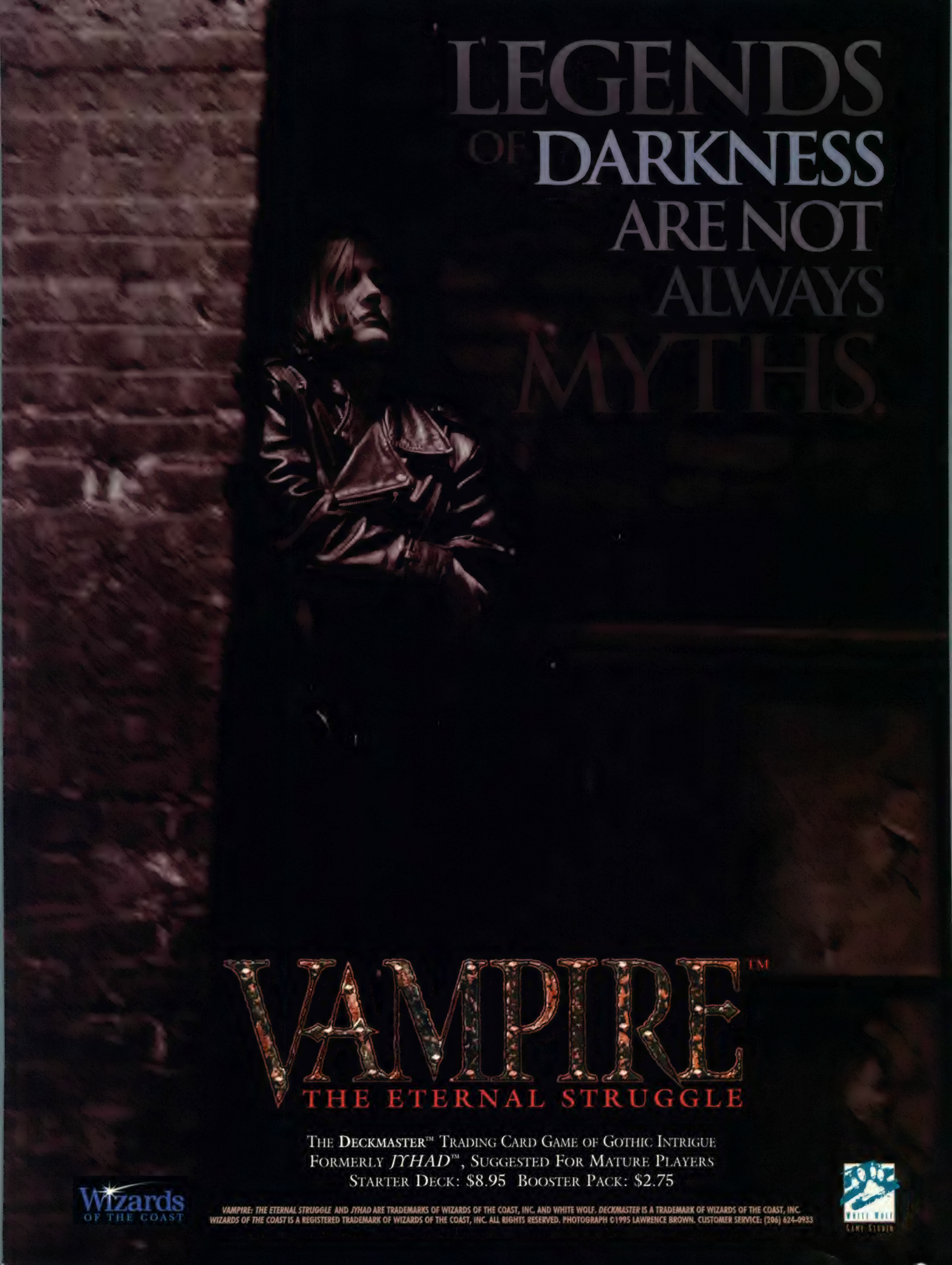
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MAGIC THE PUZZLING

by Mark Rosewater

"One by One"

Your opponent is Frank. You and he are currently engrossed in the last duel of the finals of an *Ice Age* tournament. Unfortuantely, Frank got an early lead which he has managed to keep the entire game. To make matters worse, he's cast several nasty enchantments (Lim Dûl's Hex, Seizures, Mind Whip) and stolen several of your creatures. Unable to stop his two trampling creatures, you have only one turn left before Frank walks away with the winner's trophy. Luckily, you drew a Binding Grasp during Frank's upkeep and all the pieces seem to have fallen into place. It is the start of your upkeep. Defeat Frank this turn without dying yourself.



Balduvian Hydra

Balduvian Hydra - X, When Balduvian Hydra comes into play, put X +1/+0 counters on it.
: Remove a +1/+0 counters from Balduvian Hydra to prevent 1 damage to Balduvian Hydra.
: Put a +1/+0 counter on Balduvian Hydra. Use this ability only during your upkeep.



Crown of the Ages

Crown of the Ages - 2, 4, : Switch target enchantment from one creature to another; the enchantment's new target must be legal. The controller of the enchantment does not change. Treat the enchantment as though it were just cast on the new target.



Dread Wight

Dread Wight - 3, At the end of combat, put a paralyzation counter on any creature blocking or blocked by Dread Wight and tap that creature. As long as a creature has the paralyzation counter on it, it does not untap during its controller's untap phase. As a non-interrupt fast effect, the creature's controller may pay 4 to remove a paralyzation counter.



Elder Druid

Elder Druid - 3, 3, : Tap or untap target artifact, creature, or land.



Iceberg

Iceberg - X, When Iceberg comes into play, put X ice counters on it.
: Put an ice counter on Iceberg.
: Remove an ice counter from Iceberg to add one colorless mana to your mana pool. Play this ability as an interrupt.



Krovikan Vampire

Krovikan Vampire - 3, At the end of a turn in which any creature is damaged by Krovikan Vampire and put into any graveyard, put that creature directly into play under your control. Treat the creature as though it were just summoned. If you lose control of Krovikan Vampire or Krovikan Vampire leaves play, bury the creature.



Magus of the Unseen

Magus of the Unseen - 1, 1, : Untap target artifact opponent controls and gain control of it until end of turn. If that artifact is an artifact creature, it can attack, and you may use any of its abilities that require as part of the activation cost. When you lose control of the artifact, tap it.



Márton Stromgald

Márton Stromgald - 2, If Márton Stromgald attacks, all other attacking creatures get +*/+*, until end of the turn, where * is equal to the number of other attacking creatures. If Márton blocks, all other blocking creatures get +*/+* until end of the turn, where */is equal to the number of other blocking creatures.



Mind Whip

Mind Whip - 2, During target creature's controller's upkeep, he or she pays 3 or Mind Whip deals 2 damage to him or her. If Mind Whip deals damage in this way, tap that creature.



Oath of Lim-Dûl

Oath of Lim-Dûl - 3, For each 1 damage dealt to you or 1 life you lose, sacrifice a permanent you control or choose and discard a card from your hand. You cannot sacrifice Oath of Lim-Dûl in this way. Ignore this effect if you control no permanents other than Oath of Lim-Dûl and have no cards in hand.
: Draw a card.



Legions of Lim-Dûl 2/3



Márton Stromgald 1/1



Dread Wight 3/4



Oath of Lim-Dûl



Lim-Dûl's Hex



Karplusan Giant 3/3



Barbed Sextant



Snow-Covered Forest



Snow-Covered Forest



Forest



Soldevi Machinist 1/1



Tarpan 1/1 Mind Whip



Magus of the Unseen 1/1 Seizures



Ray of Command



Binding Grasp



War Chariot

Backgrounds and layout by Anthony Ranieri

NO CARDS LEFT IN HAND



Balduvian Hydra 6/1
(has 6 counters)



Krovikan Vampire 3/3 — Aggression — Krovikan Fetish



Woolly Mammoths 3/2

stolen by Vampire



Pyknite 1/1



Stone Spirit 4/3



Snow-Covered Swamp



Arcum's Sleigh



Crown of the Ages



Moor Fiend 3/3



Forest



Snow-Covered Island



Snow-Covered Island



Island



Island



Island



Iceberg
(has 24 counters)



Zuran Spellcaster 1/1



Skull Catapult



Shyft 4/2



Brown Ouphe 1/1



Fyndhorn Brownie 1/1



Elder Druid 2/2



Despotic Scepter

DRAWN THIS TURN



Touch of Vitae



Thermokarst



Enervate



Updraft

MAGIC THE PUZZLING

by Mark Rosewater

"Final Blow"

Your opponent is Truc. You are playing the third duel of what has been a grueling match. You are about to draw the last card in your library (which you know is a Giant Growth), so you realize it is imperative that you defeat Truc this turn. Because you've seen his deck throughout the match, you realize that the three cards in his hand must be three of the following five spells (and no more than one of each): Blue Elemental Blast, Counterspell, Disenchant, Terror, and Unsummon. It is now the beginning of your upkeep. Find a way to defeat Truc this turn regardless of which three cards he has.

TRUC (BLACK/BLUE/WHITE) 5 LIFE REMAINING, 3 CARDS IN HAND



Island



Island



Swamp



Plains



Drudge Skeletons 1/1

YOU (GREEN/RED) 4 LIFE REMAINING



Forest



Mishra's Factory
(2/2 Assembly Worker when activated)



Strip Mine



Fellwar Stone



Mountain



Mountain



Mountain



War Mammoth 3/3



Sisters of the Flame 2/2

YOUR HAND

(last card in library)
DRAW THIS TURN



Blood Lust



Red Elemental Blast



Lightning Bolt



Eternal Warrior



Giant Growth

SET A


Energy Tap


Dance of the Dead


Venarian Gold

SET B


Thicket Basilisk 2/4


Siren's Call


Total War

SET C


Dwarven Ruins


Time Vault


Leviathan 10/10

SET D


Land Tax


Feldon's Cane


Demonic Tutor

SET E


Merseine


Icatian Moneychanger 0/2


Tetravus 1/1

SET F


The Abyss


Exorcist 1/1


Field of Dreams

SET G


Jalum Tome


Dwarven Armorer 1/1


Recall

SET H


Fire Sprites 1/1


Heroism


Krovikan Elementalist 1/1

"Four of a Kind"

by Mark Rosewater

For a change of pace this issue, I thought I'd try twisting your minds in a slightly different direction. Above are eight different sets of cards. Each set contains three cards that are grouped together by a particular theme. Your job is to deduce what each theme is and then find the appropriate fourth card from the cards at the bottom of the page. The solutions appear below.

Solutions to "Four of a Kind"

Set A - Paralyze (Spells that tap creatures when cast) Set B - Arcum's Whistle (Cards that have no effect on walls) Set C - Sword of the Ages (Cards that come into play tapped) Set D - Natural Selection (Cards that allow you to shuffle your library) Set E - Cocoon (Permanents that come into play with three counters) Set F - Aladdin (Cards that are also names of films) Set G - Mind Bomb (Cards that allow you to get a card from your hand to the graveyard) Set H - Electric Eel (non-red cards which have a red mana symbol in the text box)


Arcum's Whistle


Cocoon


Electric Eel 1/1


Paralyze


Mind Bomb


Aladdin 1/1


Natural Selection


Sword of the Ages

If you think you have a solution and would like to test it out (or have general feedback), please feel free to e-mail me at woody@netcom.com. Due to the volume of responses, be aware that I might take a while to respond (and no, I don't give out clues).

MAGIC TRICKS

Step-by-step solutions to last issue's Magic: The Puzzling

by Mark Rosewater

"Eeny Meeny Miney Moe"

(Puzzle published in Duelist *#5, pp. 108-109)*

We have a lot to cover this issue, so I'll cut the small talk and get right to it. Since our objective is to do 12 points of damage to Nick this turn, we should begin by examining what resources we have available that can inflict damage. We have in play four creatures which currently can do a combined total of 7 damage. Even adding in the Giant Growth, we can only do 10 damage. We also have a Rod of Ruin, which can deal an additional 1 point of damage. Since Nick has 12 life, that isn't enough. So what other cards do we have that can deal damage?

Of course, we also have to deal with the fact that Nick has two Circles of Protection (and two untapped plains to activate them) for the two colors of all our creatures in play. Luckily, the solution to both problems rests on the same card. Flashfires will do 4 points of damage to Nick (thanks to the Dingus Egg) and will eliminate the only lands he has available to activate his Circles of Protection. Unfortunately, the Flashfires will do 8 points of damage to us, so we will need to figure out a way to get more life.

Assuming we can find a way to survive Flashfires (and we Disenchant the Conversion, allowing us to cast the Flashfires in the first place), we will need to do an additional 8 damage. If we count the Giant Growth, that means we can defeat Nick if our creatures can do 5 points of damage. In order to accomplish this, we will need a way to get two creatures (the Grizzly Bear and the Hill Giant do a total of 5 damage) past Nick's four defenders.

Although we have five spells/effects to rid ourselves of creatures (Rod of Ruin, Disenchant, Earthbind, Swords to Plowshares, and Red Elemental Blast), we are going to need to save Swords to Plowshares (to gain life to survive Flashfires) and Disenchant (to get rid of Conversion so we can cast Flashfires). This means that we will have to leave one blocker alive. After a quick glance, we realize that if we take out the three fliers, we can send our creatures over in the air (using the Stone Giant's special ability).

In order for this plan to work, we are going to have to make a few adjustments to the Stone Giant to make it capable of doing everything we need it to do.

1) During upkeep, tap the Dwarven Weaponsmith and sacrifice the Library of Leng to add a +1/+1 counter to the Stone Giant, making it a 2/4 creature. Obviously this isn't enough, since the Stone Giant has to have a power greater than the toughness of our biggest creature (that being the 3 toughness of our Hill Giant).

2) Tap all four plains, both forests, the Sol Ring, and the Basalt Monolith to add four white, two green, and five colorless to your mana pool.

3) Use one white and one colorless mana to cast Disenchant and destroy Nick's Conversion.

4) Tap the four mountains to add four red mana to your mana pool. We need a spell to help us build up the Stone Giant's power (we don't want to use Giant Growth since we'll need to use that for our attack) and give it the ability to use its special ability twice.

5) Use one white mana to cast Black Ward on your Stone Giant. This will cause the Weakness to bounce off of it and make it a 4/5 creature. (Now it's big enough to use its special ability to throw the Hill Giant.)

6) Use one green mana to cast Instill Energy on the Stone Giant. Now we can use our Stone Giant to make our two attackers fly.

7) Tap the Giant twice (using Instill Energy to untap it once) to make both the Grizzly Bear and Hill Giant fly until the end of the turn. After the Stone Giant's ability is used, we can then pump up one of our attacking creatures, as the toughness restriction only applied prior to the Stone Giant throwing them.

8) Use one green mana to cast Giant Growth on the Grizzly Bear (or Hill Giant; it doesn't matter which), making the Bear a 5/5 creature. Now, we need to take out Nick's fliers in order to get through.

9) Use one red mana to cast Earthbind on the flying Pearled Unicorn, killing it.

10) Use one red mana to cast Red Elemental Blast

Backgrounds by Anthony Petrarca

ON THE UNSTABLE MUTATION ON THE HYPNOTIC SPECTER. THIS WILL CAUSE THE SPECTER TO BE A 2/2 CREATURE WITH THREE -1/-1 COUNTERS, AND IT WILL IMMEDIATELY DIE.

11) USE THREE COLORLESS MANA TO ACTIVATE THE ROD OF RUIN AND DO 1 POINT OF DAMAGE TO THE PHANTASMAL FORCES, KILLING THEM. Before we can attack, we need to cast Flashfires. But before we can cast Flashfires, we need to gain some life so that the casting of Flashfires won't kill us.

12) USE ONE WHITE MANA TO CAST SWORDS TO PLOWSHARES ON THE STONE GIANT. THIS WILL REMOVE IT FROM THE GAME AND GIVE YOU 4 LIFE. YOU ARE NOW AT 9 LIFE.

13) USE ONE RED, ONE WHITE (AS COLORLESS), ONE RED (AS COLORLESS), AND ONE COLORLESS MANA TO CAST FLASHFIRES. THIS WILL DESTROY NICK'S TWO PLAINS (DOING 4 DAMAGE TO NICK) AND YOUR FOUR PLAINS (DOING 8 DAMAGE TO YOU). NICK IS NOW AT 8 LIFE, AND YOU ARE NOW AT 1 LIFE. With Nick's flying blockers and mana for the Circles of Protection gone, you are now free to attack.

14) ATTACK FOR 8 POINTS OF DAMAGE WITH THE GRIZZLY BEAR AND HILL GIANT.



"HIGH ON LIFE"

(Puzzle published in Duelist #5, pp. 110-111)

(A brief note: a correction was published in Duelist Companion #11 *stating that Farrelite Priest should have had a Flight enchantment placed on it. The solution for the puzzle does not require Flight on Farrelite Priest.)*

The next puzzle isn't quite as simple. Your opponent has 49 life, and the only big creature you have that can even attack is the Serra Angel you stole from him. Not that it matters since Thierry has two different flying blockers. The question I'm sure running through your brain about now is "How in the world am I supposed beat him?"

Well, the key to solving this puzzle is to think of an alternative way of defeating Thierry other than direct damage. After looking through all your cards in play, in your hand, in the graveyard, and in your library (thanks to the Sylvan Library and a good memory of what card you haven't seen yet), you come to the realization that the only person you can probably defeat is yourself. Wait a minute. That could be it.

Thierry has a Mirror Universe in play and you have a Copy Artifact that you can boomerang back to your hand with the Time Elemental. And, thanks to the Time Walk in your graveyard, you can even take the extra turn needed to get the Mirror Universe untapped. The question now is, can you do enough damage to yourself between this turn and next turn's upkeep to reduce your life to zero?

The answer is both yes and no. You can do some damage but not quite 93 points. The devilish part here is that you need to make use of not one but two Mirror Universes. (What can I say—my evil twin is quite sneaky.)

The most potent card combination to do damage to ourselves is Ifh-Biff Efreet and Blood of the Martyr (which allows us to take all the damage the Efreet does to flying creatures and apply it to ourselves). But before we can do any of that, we need to make decisions about the untap phase (we have two cards that have the option of not untapping: Rubinia Soulsinger and Hollow Trees).

1) CHOOSE TO LET YOUR RUBINIA SOULSINGER UNTAP. THIS WILL CAUSE YOU TO LOSE CONTROL OF THE SERRA ANGEL.

2) CHOOSE TO KEEP YOUR HOLLOW TREES TAPPED. THIS WILL CAUSE A FOURTH COUNTER TO BE PLACED ON IT. We have no need for the Serra Angel so we untap Rubinia in case we need some other creature. And since we realize we are going to need as much green as possible (for the Ifh-Biff Efreet), we choose to keep the Hollow Trees tapped.
During the upkeep phase, we need to take care of all our upkeep effects (especially getting rid of the copied Ivory Tower, allowing us to copy the Mirror Universe).

3) TAP BOTH TUNDRAS AND BOTH ISLANDS TO ADD FOUR BLUE MANA TO YOUR MANA POOL.

4) USE THE FOUR BLUE MANA AND TAP THE TIME ELEMENTAL TO BOOMERANG THE COPY ARTIFACT (CURRENTLY OF IVORY TOWER) BACK INTO YOUR HAND.

5) GET 1 LIFE FROM THE SPIRITUAL SANCTUARY. YOU ARE NOW AT 94 LIFE.

6) SACRIFICE THE NORTHERN PALADIN TO THE ABYSS. During our draw phase, we have need of two particular cards, and since taking a little damage isn't going to hurt us much, we simply take what we need.

7) USE THE SYLVAN LIBRARY TO DRAW THE IFH-BIFF EFREET AND THE RECALL. PAY 4 LIFE TO DO SO. YOU ARE NOW AT 90 LIFE. Once our main phase begins, we are going to need to set up our double Mirror Universe switch. This involves quite a number of spells; so, for starters, let's get all the mana we need.

8) TAP THE BLUE MANA BATTERY (REMOVING ALL THREE COUNTERS), CITY OF SHADOWS, TROPICAL ISLAND, SAVANNAH, FOREST, AND CITY OF BRASS TO ADD FIVE BLUE, ONE WHITE, TWO GREEN, AND FIVE COLORLESS MANA TO YOUR MANA POOL. TAPPING THE CITY OF BRASS INFLICTS 1 POINT OF DAMAGE. YOU ARE NOW AT

89 life. We are going to need to retrieve some spells, but before we do we want to use the Psionic Blast (since we will want to retrieve it as well).

9) Use one blue mana to cast Psionic Blast on Thierry (cheaper due to the two Stone Calendars). Thierry suffers 4 damage while you suffer 2. Thierry is now at 45 life, and you are at 87 life.

10) Use one blue and four colorless mana to cast Recall for three cards (cheaper due to the two Stone Calendars). Trade your Dream Coat, Magical Hack, and Crumble for Time Walk, Blood of the Martyr, and Psionic Blast. The one stumbling block we have in our plan is Presence of the Master; it keeps us from copying the Mirror Universe. Therefore, we need to get rid of it.

11) Use one white mana to cast Disenchant (cheaper due to the two Stone Calendars) on Presence of the Master. Now we need to get the two Mirror Universes into our plan.

12) Use one blue mana to cast Copy Artifact (cheaper due to the two Stone Calendars) of Thierry's Mirror Universe. The copied Mirror Universe comes into play tapped due to both card text and Thierry's Kismet.

13) Use one blue and one colorless mana to cast Animate Artifact (cheaper due to the two Stone Calendars) on Thierry's Mirror Universe.

14) Tap Rubinia Soulsinger to take control of Thierry's animated Mirror Universe. Next, we cast Flight, since we want as many flying targets as possible for the Ifh-Biff Efreet's effects.

15) Tap the Ley Druid to untap an Island, then tap the Island for one blue mana. Use that one blue mana to add Flight to the Farrelite Priest. It can now fly. (Incidentally, this could be used on any ground creature.) The only other spells we need to cast this turn are creatures or sorceries. Since we are planning to defeat Thierry during our next upkeep phase, we won't have a chance to cast any of them later.

16) Use one blue mana to cast Time Walk (cheaper due to the two Stone Calendars). You will now get an extra turn after this one.

17) Use two green mana to summon Ifh-Biff Efreet (cheaper due to the two Stone Calendars). The Efreet will come into play tapped due to Thierry's Kismet.

18) Declare the end of your first turn. Back to the untap phase again. We make nearly opposite choices this time.

19) Choose to untap Hollow Trees.

20) Choose not to untap Rubinia Soulsinger. Before we go any further, we want to make use of our first Mirror Universe. This essentially allows us to do 42 points of damage to ourselves.

21) Tap and sacrifice one of the Mirror Universes. You trade life totals with Thierry. You now have 45 life while he now has 87 life. Next, we get our mana (and do a little damage to ourselves in the process).

22) Tap an Island, both Tundras, Tropical Island, Savannah, Forest, Hollow Trees (removing all four counters), and City of Brass to add one blue, seven green, and three white mana to your mana pool. You take 1 point of damage for tapping the City of Brass. You are now at 44 life.

23) Tap the Ley Druid to untap the City of Brass.

24) Tap the City of Brass for another green mana. You take 1 more damage for tapping the City of Brass. You are now at 43 life. Since we can order events in our upkeep any way we wish, we arrange them to allow us to take maximum damage while putting off any life giving effects until later.

25) Use a blue mana to Psionic Blast yourself. Because you are both target and caster, this will cause you 6 points of damage (4 damage as the target, 2 as the caster). You are now at 37 life. Now it's time to set up our combination.

26) Use the three white mana to cast Blood of the Martyr. Until the end of the turn, you may take any damage done to your creatures to yourself.

27) Use the eight green mana to activate a single 8-point blast of damage with the Ifh-Biff Efreet. This will cause 8 damage to both you and Thierry and to all five fliers (Serra Angel, Will-O'-The-Wisp, Wall of Air, Farrelite Priest, and the Ifh-Biff Efreet). Use the Blood of the Martyr's effect to take all the damage done to creatures to yourself. You and Thierry also each take 8 points of damage from the Efreet's effect directly. After taking 48 points of damage, you are now at -11 life and Thierry is at 79 life. You will not die with negative life until the end of the upkeep phase. Once we reach a negative life total, it's time to trade with Thierry.

28) Tap and sacrifice the other Mirror Universe to swap life points with Thierry. You now have 79 life and Thierry has -11. Just to add insult to injury, we now get as much life as we can.

29) Receive 1 life from the Spiritual Sanctuary. You are now at 80 life. Then politely watch as Thierry's victory slips through his fingers.

30) Sacrifice a creature to The Abyss (it's irrelevant which you choose; you just need to do it before the upkeep phase can end).

31) Declare the end of phase and laugh maniacally as Thierry dies.

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MAGIC: THE GATHERING

Chronicles

Card List

Cards are printed in sheets of 121 cards.
The number after the rarity classification is the number of times that particular card appears on its sheet.
The average distribution for a booster pack is nine cards from the common sheet and three cards from the uncommon sheet.
This distribution is a projected average; actual distribution in individual boosters may vary.

	Card Name	Color	Type	Artist	Rarity	Expansion
1.	____Abu Ja'far	White	Summon Leper	Ken Meyer, Jr.	Uncommon 3	
2.	____Active Volcano	Red	Instant	Justin Hampton	Common 3	
3.	____Akron Legionnaire	White	Summon Legionnaire	Mark Poole	Uncommon 1	
4.	____Aladdin	Red	Summon Aladdin	Julie Baroh	Uncommon 1	
5.	____Angelic Voices	White	Enchantment	Julie Baroh	Uncommon 1	
6.	____Arcades Sabboth	Legend	Summon Elder Dragon Legend	Edward Beard, Jr.	Uncommon 1	
7.	____Arena of the Ancients	Artifact	Artifact	Tom Wänerstrand	Uncommon 1	
8.	____Argothian Pixies	Green	Summon Faeries	Amy Weber	Common 3	
9.	____Ashnod's Altar	Artifact	Artifact	Anson Maddocks	Common 2	
10.	__Ashnod's Transmogrant	Artifact	Artifact	Mark Tedin	Common 2	
11.	__Axelrod Gunnarson	Legend	Summon Legend	Scott Kirschner	Uncommon 1	
12.	__Ayesha Tanaka	Legend	Summon Legend	Bryon Wackwitz	Uncommon 1	
13.	__Azure Drake	Blue	Summon Drake	Dan Frazier	Uncommon 3	
14.	__Banshee	Black	Summon Banshee	Jesper Myrfors	Uncommon 3	
15.	__Barl's Cage	Artifact	Artifact	Tom Wänerstrand	Uncommon 1	
16.	__Beasts of Bogardan	Red	Summon Beasts	Daniel Gelon	Uncommon 3	
17.	__Blood Moon	Red	Enchantment	Tom Wänerstrand	Uncommon 1	
18.	__Blood of the Martyr	White	Instant	Christopher Rush	Uncommon 3	
19.	__Bog Rats	Black	Summon Rats	Ron Spencer	Common 3	
20.	__Book of Rass	Artifact	Artifact	Sandra Everingham	Uncommon 1	
21.	__Boomerang	Blue	Instant	Brian Snoddy	Common 3	
22.	__Bronze Horse	Artifact	Artifact Creature	Mark Poole	Uncommon 1	
23.	__Cat Warriors	Green	Summon Cat Warriors	Melissa Benson	Common 3	
24.	__Chromium	Legend	Summon Elder Dragon Legend	Edward Beard, Jr.	Uncommon 1	
25.	__City of Brass	Land	Land	Mark Tedin	Uncommon 1	
26.	__Cocoon	Green	Enchant Creature	Mark Tedin	Uncommon 3	
27.	__Concordant Crossroads	Green	Enchant World	Amy Weber	Uncommon 1	
28.	__Craw Giant	Green	Summon Giant	Christopher Rush	Uncommon 3	
29.	__Cuombajj Witches	Black	Summon Witches	Kaja Foglio	Common 3	
30.	__Cyclone	Green	Enchantment	Mark Tedin	Uncommon 1	
31.	__D'Avenant Archer	White	Summon Archer	Douglas Shuler	Common 3	
32.	__Dakkon Blackblade	Legend	Summon Legend	Richard Kane Ferguson	Uncommon 1	
33.	__Dance of Many	Blue	Enchantment	Sandra Everingham	Uncommon 1	
34.	__Dandân	Blue	Summon Dandân	Drew Tucker	Common 3	
35.	__Divine Offering	White	Instant	Jeff A. Menges	Common 3	



Backgrounds by Robyn Williamson and Amy Weber
Illustration by Tom Wänerstrand

Card Name	Color	Type	Artist	Rarity	Expansion
36. __Emerald Dragonfly	Green	Summon Dragonfly	Quinton Hoover	Common 3	
37. __Enchantment Alteration	Blue	Instant	Brian Snoddy	Uncommon 3	
38. __Erhnam Djinn	Green	Summon Djinn	Ken Meyer, Jr.	Uncommon 3	
39. __Fallen Angel	Black	Summon Angel	Anson Maddocks	Uncommon 3	
40. __Fallen, The	Black	Summon Fallen	Jesper Myrfors	Uncommon 3	
41. __Feldon's Cane	Artifact	Artifact	Mark Tedin	Common 2	
42. __Fire Drake	Red	Summon Drake	Christopher Rush	Uncommon 3	
43. __Fishliver Oil	Blue	Enchant Creature	Anson Maddocks	Common 3	
44. __Flash Flood	Blue	Instant	Tom Wänerstrand	Common 3	
45. __Fountain of Youth	Artifact	Artifact	Daniel Gelon	Common 2	
46. __Gabriel Angelfire	Legend	Summon Legend	Daniel Gelon	Uncommon 1	
47. __Gauntlets of Chaos	Artifact	Artifact	Dan Frazier	Uncommon 1	
48. __Ghazbán Ogre	Green	Summon Ogre	Jesper Myrfors	Common 3	
49. __Giant Slug	Black	Summon Slug	Anson Maddocks	Common 3	
50. __Goblin Artisans	Red	Summon Goblins	Julie Baroh	Uncommon 3	
51. __Goblin Digging Team	Red	Summon Goblins	Ron Spencer	Common 3	
52. __Goblin Shrine	Red	Enchant Land	Ron Spencer	Common 3	
53. __Goblins of the Flarg	Red	Summon Goblins	Tom Wänerstrand	Common 3	
54. __Hasran Ogress	Black	Summon Ogre	Dan Frazier	Common 3	
55. __Hell's Caretaker	Black	Summon Hell's Caretaker	Sandra Everingham	Uncommon 1	
56. __Horn of Deafening	Artifact	Artifact	Dan Frazier	Uncommon 1	
57. __Indestructible Aura	White	Instant	Mark Poole	Common 3	
58. __Ivory Guardians	White	Summon Guardians	Melissa Benson	Uncommon 3	
59. __Jalum Tome	Artifact	Artifact	Tom Wänerstrand	Uncommon 1	
60. __Jeweled Bird	Artifact	Artifact	Amy Weber	Uncommon 1	
61. __Johan	Legend	Summon Legend	Mark Tedin	Uncommon 1	
62. __Juxtapose	Blue	Sorcery	Justin Hampton	Uncommon 1	
63. __Keepers of the Faith	White	Summon Keepers	Daniel Gelon	Common 3	
64. __Kei Takahashi	Legend	Summon Legend	Scott Kirschner	Common 1	
65. __Land's Edge	Red	Enchant World	Brian Snoddy	Uncommon 1	
66. __Living Armor	Artifact	Artifact	Anson Maddocks	Common 2	
67. __Marhault Elsdragon	Legend	Summon Legend	Mark Poole	Common 1	
68. __Metamorphosis	Green	Sorcery	Christopher Rush	Common 3	
69. __Mountain Yeti	Red	Summon Yeti	Dan Frazier	Common 3	
70. __Nebuchadnezzar	Legend	Summon Legend	Richard Kane Ferguson	Uncommon 1	
71. __Nicol Bolas	Legend	Summon Elder Dragon Legend	Edward Beard, Jr.	Uncommon 1	
72. __Obelisk of Undoing	Artifact	Artifact	Tom Wänerstrand	Uncommon 1	
73. __Palladia-Mors	Legend	Summon Elder Dragon Legend	Edward Beard, Jr.	Uncommon 1	
74. __Petra Sphinx	White	Summon Sphinx	Sandra Everingham	Uncommon 1	
75. __Primordial Ooze	Red	Summon Ooze	Sandra Everingham	Uncommon 3	
76. __Puppet Master	Blue	Enchant Creature	Sandra Everingham	Uncommon 3	
77. __Rabid Wombat	Green	Summon Wombat	Kaja Foglio	Uncommon 3	
78. __Rakalite	Artifact	Artifact	Christopher Rush	Uncommon 1	
79. __Recall	Blue	Sorcery	Brian Snoddy	Uncommon 3	
80. __Remove Soul	Blue	Interrupt	Brian Snoddy	Common 3	





Illustrations by Quinton Hoover, Anson Maddocks, and Kaja Foglio

Card Name	Color	Type	Artist	Rarity	Expansion
81. __Repentant Blacksmith	White	Summon Smith	Drew Tucker	Common 3	
82. __Revelation	Green	Enchant World	Kaja Foglio	Uncommon 1	
83. __Rubinia Soulsinger	Legend	Summon Legend	Rob Alexander	Uncommon 1	
84. __Runesword	Artifact	Artifact	Christopher Rush	Common 2	
85. __Safe Haven	Land	Land	Christopher Rush	Uncommon 1	
86. __Scavenger Folk	Green	Summon Scavenger Folk	Dennis Detwiller	Common 3	
87. __Sentinel	Artifact	Artifact Creature	Randy Asplund-Faith	Uncommon 1	
88. __Serpent Generator	Artifact	Artifact	Mark Tedin	Uncommon 1	
89. __Shield Wall	White	Instant	Douglas Shuler	Uncommon 3	
90. __Shimian Night Stalker	Black	Summon Night Stalker	Jesper Myrfors	Uncommon 3	
91. __Sivitri Scarzam	Legend	Summon Legend	NéNé Thomas	Common 1	
92. __Sol'kanar the Swamp King	Legend	Summon Legend	Richard Kane Ferguson	Uncommon 1	
93. __Stangg	Legend	Summon Legend	Mark Poole	Uncommon 1	
94. __Storm Seeker	Green	Instant	Mark Poole	Uncommon 3	
95. __Takklemaggot	Black	Enchant Creature	Daniel Gelon	Uncommon 3	
96. __Teleport	Blue	Instant	Douglas Shuler	Uncommon 1	
97. __Tobias Andrion	Legend	Summon Legend	Andi Rusu	Common 1	
98. __Tor Wauki	Legend	Summon Legend	Randy Asplund-Faith	Common 1	
99. __Tormod's Crypt	Artifact	Artifact	Christopher Rush	Common 2	
100. __Transmutation	Black	Instant	Susan Van Camp	Common 3	
101. __Triassic Egg	Artifact	Artifact	Dan Frazier	Uncommon 1	
102. __Urza's Mine (ver. 1)	Land	Land	Anson Maddocks	Common 1	
103. __Urza's Mine (ver. 2)	Land	Land	Anson Maddocks	Common 1	
104. __Urza's Mine (ver. 3)	Land	Land	Anson Maddocks	Common 1	
105. __Urza's Mine (ver. 4)	Land	Land	Anson Maddocks	Common 1	
106. __Urza's Power Plant (ver. 1)	Land	Land	Mark Tedin	Common 1	
107. __Urza's Power Plant (ver. 2)	Land	Land	Mark Tedin	Common 1	
108. __Urza's Power Plant (ver. 3)	Land	Land	Mark Tedin	Common 1	
109. __Urza's Power Plant (ver. 4)	Land	Land	Mark Tedin	Common 1	
110. __Urza's Tower (ver. 1)	Land	Land	Mark Poole	Common 1	
111. __Urza's Tower (ver. 2)	Land	Land	Mark Poole	Common 1	
112. __Urza's Tower (ver. 3)	Land	Land	Mark Poole	Common 1	
113. __Urza's Tower (ver. 4)	Land	Land	Mark Poole	Common 1	
114. __Vaevictis Asmadi	Legend	Summon Elder Dragon Legend	Andi Rusu	Uncommon 1	
115. __Voodoo Doll	Artifact	Artifact	Sandra Everingham	Uncommon 1	
116. __Wall of Heat	Red	Summon Wall	Richard Thomas	Common 3	
117. __Wall of Opposition	Red	Summon Wall	Harold McNeill	Uncommon 3	
118. __Wall of Shadows	Black	Summon Wall	Pete Venters	Common 3	
119. __Wall of Vapor	Blue	Summon Wall	Richard Thomas	Common 3	
120. __Wall of Wonder	Blue	Summon Wall	Richard Thomas	Uncommon 3	
121. __War Elephant	White	Summon Elephant	Kristen Bishop	Common 3	
122. __Witch Hunter	White	Summon Hunter	Jesper Myrfors	Uncommon 3	
123. __Wretched, The	Black	Summon Wretched	Christopher Rush	Uncommon 1	
124. __Xira Arien	Legend	Summon Legend	Melissa Benson	Uncommon 1	
125. __Yawgmoth Demon	Black	Summon Demon	Sandra Everingham	Uncommon 1	





Illustrations by Daniel Gelon and Sandra Everingham

MAGIC: THE GATHERING

Ice Age

CARD LIST

Cards are printed in sheets of 121 cards. One sheet is devoted entirely to basic land, one to common cards, one to uncommon cards, and one to rare cards. The number after the rarity classification indicates the number of times that particular card appears on its sheet. The average distribution for a starter deck is twenty-two cards from the land sheet, twenty-six from the common sheet, nine from the uncommon sheet, and three from the rare sheet. The average distribution for a booster pack is eleven cards from the common sheet, three from the uncommon, and one from the rare sheet. These distributions are the projected average; actual distribution in individual starter decks and booster packs may vary.

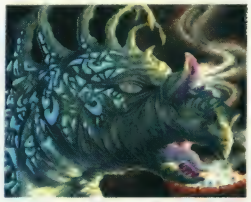
	Card Name	Color	Type	Artist	Rarity
1.	____Abyssal Specter	Black	Summon Specter	Ruth Thompson	Uncommon 1
2.	____Adarkar Sentinel	Artifact	Artifact Creature	Melissa Benson	Uncommon 1
3.	____Adarkar Unicorn	White	Summon Unicorn	Quinton Hoover	Common 1
4.	____Adarkar Wastes	Land	Land	Mike Raabe	Rare 1
5.	____Aegis of the Meek	Artifact	Artifact	L.A. Williams	Rare 1
6.	____Aggression	Red	Enchant Creature	Rick Emond	Uncommon 1
7.	____Altar of Bone	Multi-color	Sorcery	Melissa Benson	Rare 1
8.	____Amulet of Quoz	Artifact	Artifact	Dan Frazier	Rare 1
9.	____Anarchy	Red	Sorcery	Phil Foglio	Uncommon 1
10.	____Arctic Foxes	White	Summon Foxes	Mark Poole	Common 1
11.	____Arcum's Sleigh	Artifact	Artifact	Tom Wänerstrand	Uncommon 1
12.	____Arcum's Weathervane	Artifact	Artifact	Tom Wänerstrand	Uncommon 1
13.	____Arcum's Whistle	Artifact	Artifact	Quinton Hoover	Uncommon 1
14.	____Arenson's Aura	White	Enchantment	Nicola Leonard	Common 1
15.	____Armor of Faith	White	Enchant Creature	Anson Maddocks	Common 1
16.	____Arnjlot's Ascent	Blue	Enchantment	Drew Tucker	Common 1
17.	____Ashen Ghoul	Black	Summon Ghoul	Ron Spencer	Uncommon 1
18.	____Aurochs	Green	Summon Aurochs	Ken Meyer, Jr.	Common 1
19.	____Avalanche	Red	Sorcery	Brian Snoddy	Uncommon 1
20.	____Balduvian Barbarians	Red	Summon Barbarians	Mark Poole	Common 1
21.	____Balduvian Bears	Green	Summon Bears	Quinton Hoover	Common 1
22.	____Balduvian Conjurer	Blue	Summon Wizard	Mark Tedin	Uncommon 1
23.	____Balduvian Hydra	Red	Summon Hydra	Melissa Benson	Rare 1
24.	____Balduvian Shaman	Blue	Summon Cleric	Quinton Hoover	Common 1
25.	____Barbarian Guides	Red	Summon Barbarians	Richard Thomas	Common 1
26.	____Barbed Sextant	Artifact	Artifact	Amy Weber	Common 1
27.	____Baton of Morale	Artifact	Artifact	Douglas Shuler	Uncommon 1
28.	____Battle Cry	White	Instant	Douglas Shuler	Uncommon 1
29.	____Battle Frenzy	Red	Instant	Brian Snoddy	Common 1
30.	____Binding Grasp	Blue	Enchant Creature	Ruth Thompson	Uncommon 1
31.	____Black Scarab	White	Enchant Creature	Kaja Foglio	Uncommon 1
32.	____Blessed Wine	White	Instant	Kaja Foglio	Common 1
33.	____Blinking Spirit	White	Summon Blinking Spirit	L.A. Williams	Rare 1



Backgrounds by Tony Petrarca
Illustration by Quinton Hoover

	Card Name	Color	Type	Artist	Rarity
34.	____Blizzard	Green	Enchantment	Anson Maddocks	Rare 1
35.	____Blue Scarab	White	Enchant Creature	Amy Weber	Uncommon 1
36.	____Bone Shaman	Red	Summon Giant	Anson Maddocks	Common 1
37.	____Brainstorm	Blue	Instant	Christopher Rush	Common 1
38.	____Brand of Ill Omen	Red	Enchant Creature	Rob Alexander	Rare 1
39.	____Breath of Dreams	Blue	Enchantment	Phil Foglio	Uncommon 1
40.	____Brine Shaman	Black	Summon Cleric	Cornelius Brudi	Common 1
41.	____Brown Ouphe	Green	Summon Ouphe	Daniel Gelon	Common 1
42.	____Brushland	Land	Land	Bryon Wackwitz	Rare 1
43.	____Burnt Offering	Black	Interrupt	Daniel Gelon	Common 1
44.	____Call to Arms	White	Enchantment	Randy Gallegos	Rare 1
45.	____Caribou Range	White	Enchant Land	Ruth Thompson	Rare 1
46.	____Celestial Sword	Artifact	Artifact	Amy Weber	Rare 1
47.	____Centaur Archer	Multi-color	Summon Centaur	Melissa Benson	Uncommon 1
48.	____Chaos Lord	Red	Summon Lord	Brian Snoddy	Rare 1
49.	____Chaos Moon	Red	Enchantment	Drew Tucker	Rare 1
50.	____Chromatic Armor	Multi-color	Enchant Creature	Mark Poole	Rare 1
51.	____Chub Toad	Green	Summon Toad	Daniel Gelon	Common 1
52.	____Circle of Protection: Black	White	Enchantment	Sandra Everingham	Common 1
53.	____Circle of Protection: Blue	White	Enchantment	Pete Venters	Common 1
54.	____Circle of Protection: Green	White	Enchantment	Sandra Everingham	Common 1
55.	____Circle of Protection: Red	White	Enchantment	Pete Venters	Common 1
56.	____Circle of Protection: White	White	Enchantment	Sandra Everingham	Common 1
57.	____Clairvoyance	Blue	Instant	Ken Meyer, Jr.	Common 1
58.	____Cloak of Confusion	Black	Enchant Creature	Margaret Organ-Kean	Common 1
59.	____Cold Snap	White	Enchantment	Randy Gallegos	Uncommon 1
60.	____Conquer	Red	Enchant Land	Randy Gallegos	Uncommon 1
61.	____Cooperation	White	Enchant Creature	Phil Foglio	Common 1
62.	____Counterspell	Blue	Interrupt	L.A. Williams	Common 1
63.	____Crown of the Ages	Artifact	Artifact	Dan Frazier	Rare 1
64.	____Curse of Marit Lage	Red	Enchantment	Amy Weber	Rare 1
65.	____Dance of the Dead	Black	Enchant Dead Creature	Randy Gallegos	Uncommon 1
66.	____Dark Banishing	Black	Instant	Drew Tucker	Common 1
67.	____Dark Ritual	Black	Interrupt	Justin Hampton	Common 1
68.	____Death Ward	White	Instant	Harold McNeill	Common 1
69.	____Deflection	Blue	Interrupt	Mike Raabe	Rare 1
70.	____Demonic Consultation	Black	Instant	Rob Alexander	Uncommon 1
71.	____Despotic Scepter	Artifact	Artifact	Richard Thomas	Rare 1
72.	____Diabolic Vision	Multi-color	Sorcery	Anthony Waters	Uncommon 1
73.	____Dire Wolves	Green	Summon Wolves	Ron Spencer	Common 1
74.	____Disenchant	White	Instant	Brian Snoddy	Common 1
75.	____Dread Wight	Black	Summon Wight	Daniel Gelon	Rare 1
76.	____Dreams of the Dead	Blue	Enchantment	Heather Hudson	Uncommon 1
77.	____Drift of the Dead	Black	Summon Wall	Brian Snoddy	Uncommon 1
78.	____Drought	White	Enchantment	NéNé Thomas	Uncommon 1
79.	____Dwarven Armory	Red	Enchantment	Richard Thomas	Rare 1
80.	____Earthlink	Multi-color	Enchantment	Richard Kane Ferguson	Rare 1
81.	____Earthlore	Green	Enchant Land	Drew Tucker	Common 1
82.	____Elder Druid	Green	Summon Cleric	Richard Kane Ferguson	Rare 1
83.	____Elemental Augury	Multi-color	Enchantment	Anthony Waters	Rare 1





Illustrations by Cornelius Brudi and Anthony Waters

	Card Name	Color	Type	Artist	Rarity
84. ____	Elkin Bottle	Artifact	Artifact	Quinton Hoover	Rare 1
85. ____	Elvish Healer	White	Summon Cleric	Rick Emond	Common 1
86. ____	Enduring Renewal	White	Enchantment	Harold McNeill	Rare 1
87. ____	Energy Storm	White	Enchantment	Sandra Everingham	Rare 1
88. ____	Enervate	Blue	Instant	L.A. Williams	Common 1
89. ____	Errant Minion	Blue	Enchant Creature	Harold McNeill	Common 1
90. ____	Errantry	Red	Enchant Creature	L.A. Williams	Common 1
91. ____	Essence Filter	Green	Sorcery	Rick Emond	Common 1
92. ____	Essence Flare	Blue	Enchant Creature	Richard Kane Ferguson	Common 1
93. ____	Essence Vortex	Multi-color	Instant	Margaret Organ-Kean	Uncommon 1
94. ____	Fanatical Fever	Green	Instant	Julie Baroh	Uncommon 1
95. ____	Fear	Black	Enchant Creature	Rick Emond	Common 1
96. ____	Fiery Justice	Multi-color	Sorcery	Melissa Benson	Rare 1
97. ____	Fire Covenant	Multi-color	Instant	Dan Frazier	Uncommon 1
98. ____	Flame Spirit	Red	Summon Spirit	Justin Hampton	Uncommon 1
99. ____	Flare	Red	Instant	Drew Tucker	Common 1
100. ___	Flooded Woodlands	Multi-color	Enchantment	Kaja Foglio	Rare 1
101. ___	Flow of Maggots	Black	Summon Insects	Ron Spencer	Rare 1
102. ___	Folk of the Pines	Green	Summon Dryads	NéNé Thomas & Catherine Buck	Common 1
103. ___	Forbidden Lore	Green	Enchant Land	Christopher Rush	Rare 1
104. ___	Force Void	Blue	Interrupt	Mark Tedin	Uncommon 1
105. ___	Forest	Land	Land	Pat Morrissey	Land 6
106. ___	Forest	Land	Land	Pat Morrissey	Land 6
107. ___	Forest	Land	Land	Pat Morrissey	Land 6
108. ___	Forgotten Lore	Green	Sorcery	Harold McNeill	Uncommon 1
109. ___	Formation	White	Instant	Ken Meyer, Jr.	Rare 1
110. ___	Foul Familiar	Black	Summon Spirit	Anson Maddocks	Common 1
111. ___	Foxfire	Green	Instant	Margaret Organ-Kean	Common 1
112. ___	Freyalise Supplicant	Green	Summon Cleric	Liz Danforth & Douglas Shuler	Uncommon 1
113. ___	Freyalise's Charm	Green	Enchantment	Margaret Organ-Kean	Uncommon 1
114. ___	Freyalise's Winds	Green	Enchantment	Mark Tedin	Rare 1
115. ___	Fumarole	Multi-color	Sorcery	Drew Tucker	Uncommon 1
116. ___	Fylgja	White	Enchant Creature	Edward Beard, Jr.	Common 1
117. ___	Fyndhorn Bow	Artifact	Artifact	Rob Alexander	Uncommon 1
118. ___	Fyndhorn Brownie	Green	Summon Brownie	Richard Thomas	Common 1
119. ___	Fyndhorn Elder	Green	Summon Elf	Christopher Rush	Uncommon 1
120. ___	Fyndhorn Elves	Green	Summon Elves	Justin Hampton	Common 1
121. ___	Fyndhorn Pollen	Green	Enchantment	Phil Foglio	Rare 1
122. ___	Game of Chaos	Red	Sorcery	Drew Tucker	Rare 1
123. ___	Gangrenous Zombies	Black	Summon Zombies	Brian Snoddy	Common 1
124. ___	Gaze of Pain	Black	Sorcery	Anson Maddocks	Common 1
125. ___	General Jarkeld	White	Summon Legend	Richard Thomas	Rare 1
126. ___	Ghostly Flame	Multi-color	Enchantment	Randy Gallegos	Rare 1
127. ___	Giant Growth	Green	Instant	L.A. Williams	Common 1
128. ___	Giant Trap Door Spider	Multi-color	Summon Spider	Heather Hudson	Uncommon 1
129. ___	Glacial Chasm	Land	Land	Liz Danforth	Uncommon 1
130. ___	Glacial Crevasses	Red	Enchantment	Mike Raabe	Rare 1
131. ___	Glacial Wall	Blue	Summon Wall	Dameon Willich	Uncommon 1
132. ___	Glaciers	Multi-color	Enchantment	Mark Tedin	Rare 1
133. ___	Goblin Lyre	Artifact	Artifact	Mike Kimble	Rare 1







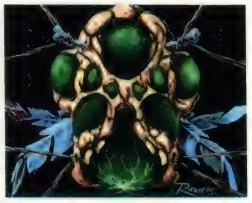
Illustrations by Drew Tucker, Edward Beard Jr., and Brian Snoddy

	Card Name	Color	Type	Artist	Rarity
134.	___Goblin Mutant	Red	Summon Goblin	Daniel Gelon	Uncommon 1
135.	___Gob1lin Sappers	Red	Summon Goblins	Jeff A. Menges	Common 1
136.	___Goblin Ski Patrol	Red	Summon Goblins	Mark Poole	Common 1
137.	___Goblin Snowman	Red	Summon Goblins	Daniel Gelon	Uncommon 1
138.	___Gorilla Pack	Green	Summon Gorilla Pack	Anthony Waters	Common 1
139.	___Gravebind	Black	Instant	Drew Tucker	Rare 1
140.	___Green Scarab	White	Enchant Creature	Nicola Leonard	Uncommon 1
141.	___Grizzled Wolverine	Red	Summon Wolverine	Cornelius Brudi	Common 1
142.	___Hallowed Ground	White	Enchantment	Douglas Shuler	Uncommon 1
143.	___Halls of Mist	Land	Land	Mark Poole	Rare 1
144.	___Heal	White	Instant	Mark Tedin	Common 1
145.	___Hecatomb	Black	Enchantment	NéNé Thomas	Rare 1
146.	___Hematite Talisman	Artifact	Artifact	L.A. Williams	Uncommon 1
147.	___Hipparion	White	Summon Hipparion	Dameon Willich	Uncommon 1
148.	___Hoar Shade	Black	Summon Shade	Richard Thomas	Common 1
149.	___Hot Springs	Green	Enchant Land	Nicola Leonard	Rare 1
150.	___Howl from Beyond	Black	Instant	Mark Poole	Common 1
151.	___Hurricane	Green	Sorcery	Cornelius Brudi	Uncommon 1
152.	___Hyalopterous Lemure	Black	Summon Lemure	Richard Thomas	Uncommon 1
153.	___Hydroblast	Blue	Interrupt	Kaja Foglio	Common 1
154.	___Hymn of Rebirth	Multi-color	Sorcery	Richard Kane Ferguson	Uncommon 1
155.	___Ice Cauldron	Artifact	Artifact	Dan Frazier	Rare 1
156.	___Ice Floe	Land	Land	Jeff A. Menges	Uncommon 1
157.	___Iceberg	Blue	Enchantment	Jeff A. Menges	Uncommon 1
158.	___Icequake	Black	Sorcery	Richard Kane Ferguson	Uncommon 1
159.	___Icy Manipulator	Artifact	Artifact	Amy Weber	Uncommon 1
160.	___Icy Prison	Blue	Enchantment	Anson Maddocks	Rare 1
161.	___Illusionary Forces	Blue	Summon Illusion	Justin Hampton	Common 1
162.	___Illusionary Presence	Blue	Summon Illusion	Kaja Foglio	Rare 1
163.	___Illusionary Terrain	Blue	Enchantment	Rob Alexander	Uncommon 1
164.	___Illusionary Wall	Blue	Summon Wall	Mark Poole	Common 1
165.	___Illusions of Grandeur	Blue	Enchantment	Quinton Hoover	Rare 1
166.	___Imposing Visage	Red	Enchant Creature	Phil Foglio	Common 1
167.	___Incinerate	Red	Instant	Mark Poole	Common 1
168.	___Infernal Darkness	Black	Enchantment	Phil Foglio	Rare 1
169.	___Infernal Denizen	Black	Summon Infernal Denizen	Drew Tucker	Rare 1
170.	___Infinite Hourglass	Artifact	Artifact	Harold McNeill	Rare 1
171.	___Infuse	Blue	Instant	Randy Gallegos	Common 1
172.	___Island	Land	Land	Anson Maddocks	Land 6
173.	___Island	Land	Land	Anson Maddocks	Land 6
174.	___Island	Land	Land	Anson Maddocks	Land 6
175.	___Jester's Cap	Artifact	Artifact	Dan Frazier	Rare 1
176.	___Jester's Mask	Artifact	Artifact	Dan Frazier	Rare 1
177.	___Jeweled Amulet	Artifact	Artifact	Dan Frazier	Uncommon 1
178.	___Johtull Wurm	Green	Summon Wurm	Daniel Gelon	Uncommon 1
179.	___Jokulhaups	Red	Sorcery	Richard Thomas	Rare 1
180.	___Juniper Order Druid	Green	Summon Cleric	Jeff A. Menges	Common 1
181.	___Justice	White	Enchantment	Ruth Thompson	Uncommon 1
182.	___Karplusan Forest	Land	Land	Nicola Leonard	Rare 1
183.	___Karplusan Giant	Red	Summon Giant	Daniel Gelon	Uncommon 1



Illustration by Daniel Gelon

	Card Name	Color	Type	Artist	Rarity
184.	___Karplusan Yeti	Red	Summon Yeti	Quinton Hoover	Rare 1
185.	___Kelsinko Ranger	White	Summon Ranger	Mark Poole	Common 1
186.	___Kjeldoran Dead	Black	Summon Dead	Melissa Benson	Common 1
187.	___Kjeldoran Elite Guard	White	Summon Soldier	Melissa Benson	Uncommon 1
188.	___Kjeldoran Frostbeast	Multi-color	Summon Frostbeast	Mark Poole	Uncommon 1
189.	___Kjeldoran Guard	White	Summon Soldier	Anthony Waters	Common 1
190.	___Kjeldoran Knight	White	Summon Knight	Ron Spencer	Rare 1
191.	___Kjeldoran Phalanx	White	Summon Soldiers	Richard Kane Ferguson	Rare 1
192.	___Kjeldoran Royal Guard	White	Summon Soldiers	L.A. Williams	Rare 1
193.	___Kjeldoran Skycaptain	White	Summon Soldier	Mark Poole	Uncommon 1
194.	___Kjeldoran Skyknight	White	Summon Soldier	Mark Poole	Common 1
195.	___Kjeldoran Warrior	White	Summon Hero	Mark Poole	Common 1
196.	___Knight of Stromgald	Black	Summon Knight	Mark Poole	Uncommon 1
197.	___Krovikan Elementalist	Black	Summon Wizard	Douglas Shuler	Uncommon 1
198.	___Krovikan Fetish	Black	Enchant Creature	Heather Hudson	Common 1
199.	___Krovikan Sorcerer	Blue	Summon Wizard	Pat Morrissey	Common 1
200.	___Krovikan Vampire	Black	Summon Vampire	Quinton Hoover	Uncommon 1
201.	___Land Cap	Land	Land	L.A. Williams	Rare 1
202.	___Lapis Lazuli Talisman	Artifact	Artifact	Amy Weber	Uncommon 1
203.	___Lava Burst	Red	Sorcery	Tom Wänerstrand	Common 1
204.	___Lava Tubes	Land	Land	Bryon Wackwitz	Rare 1
205.	___Legions of Lim-Dûl	Black	Summon Zombies	Anson Maddocks	Common 1
206.	___Leshrac's Rite	Black	Enchant Creature	Richard Thomas	Uncommon 1
207.	___Leshrac's Sigil	Black	Enchantment	Drew Tucker	Uncommon 1
208.	___Lhurgoyf	Green	Summon Lhurgoyf	Pete Venters	Rare 1
209.	___Lightning Blow	White	Instant	Harold McNeill	Rare 1
210.	___Lim-Dûl's Cohort	Black	Summon Zombies	Douglas Shuler	Common 1
211.	___Lim-Dûl's Hex	Black	Enchantment	Liz Danforth	Uncommon 1
212.	___Lost Order of Jarkeld	White	Summon Knights	Andi Rusu	Rare 1
213.	___Lure	Green	Enchant Creature	Phil Foglio	Uncommon 1
214.	___Maddening Wind	Green	Enchant Creature	Dameon Willich	Uncommon 1
215.	___Magus of the Unseen	Blue	Summon Wizard	Kaja Foglio	Rare 1
216.	___Malachite Talisman	Artifact	Artifact	Christopher Rush	Uncommon 1
217.	___Márton Stromgald	Red	Summon Legend	Mark Poole	Rare 1
218.	___Melee	Red	Instant	Dameon Willich	Uncommon 1
219.	___Melting	Red	Enchantment	Randy Gallegos	Uncommon 1
220.	___Mercenaries	White	Summon Mercenaries	Cornelius Brudi	Rare 1
221.	___Merieke Ri Berit	Multi-color	Summon Legend	Heather Hudson	Rare 1
222.	___Mesmeric Trance	Blue	Enchantment	Dan Frazier	Rare 1
223.	___Meteor Shower	Red	Sorcery	Rick Emond	Common 1
224.	___Mind Ravel	Black	Sorcery	Mark Tedin	Common 1
225.	___Mind Warp	Black	Sorcery	Liz Danforth	Uncommon 1
226.	___Mind Whip	Black	Enchant Creature	Drew Tucker	Rare 1
227.	___Minion of Leshrac	Black	Summon Demon	L.A. Williams	Rare 1
228.	___Minion of Tevesh Szat	Black	Summon Demon	Julie Baroh	Rare 1
229.	___Mistfolk	Blue	Summon Mistfolk	Quinton Hoover	Common 1
230.	___Mole Worms	Black	Summon Worms	Daniel Gelon	Uncommon 1
231.	___Monsoon	Multi-color	Enchantment	NéNé Thomas	Rare 1
232.	___Moor Fiend	Black	Summon Fiend	Anson Maddocks	Common 1
233.	___Mountain	Land	Land	Tom Wänerstrand	Land 6





Illustrations by Christopher Rush and Mark Tedin

	Card Name	Color	Type	Artist	Rarity
234.	___Mountain	Land	Land	Tom Wänerstrand	Land 6
235.	___Mountain	Land	Land	Tom Wänerstrand	Land 6
236.	___Mountain Goat	Red	Summon Goat	Cornelius Brudi	Common 1
237.	___Mountain Titan	Multi-color	Summon Titan	Melissa Benson	Rare 1
238.	___Mudslide	Red	Enchantment	Brian Snoddy	Rare 1
239.	___Musician	Blue	Summon Mage	Drew Tucker	Rare 1
240.	___Mystic Might	Blue	Enchant Land	Nicola Leonard	Rare 1
241.	___Mystic Remora	Blue	Enchantment	Ken Meyer, Jr.	Common 1
242.	___Nacre Talisman	Artifact	Artifact	Mark Tedin	Uncommon 1
243.	___Naked Singularity	Artifact	Artifact	Mark Tedin	Rare 1
244.	___Nature's Lore	Green	Sorcery	Rick Emond	Uncommon 1
245.	___Necropotence	Black	Enchantment	Mark Tedin	Rare 1
246.	___Norritt	Black	Summon Imp	Mike Raabe	Common 1
247.	___Oath of Lim-Dûl	Black	Enchantment	Douglas Shuler	Rare 1
248.	___Onyx Talisman	Artifact	Artifact	Sandra Everingham	Uncommon 1
249.	___Orcish Cannoneers	Red	Summon Orcs	Dan Frazier	Uncommon 1
250.	___Orcish Conscripts	Red	Summon Orcs	Douglas Shuler	Common 1
251.	___Orcish Farmer	Red	Summon Orc	Dan Frazier	Common 1
252.	___Orcish Healer	Red	Summon Cleric	Quinton Hoover	Uncommon 1
253.	___Orcish Librarian	Red	Summon Orc	Phil Foglio	Rare 1
254.	___Orcish Lumberjack	Red	Summon Orc	Dan Frazier	Common 1
255.	___Orcish Squatters	Red	Summon Orcs	Richard Kane Ferguson	Rare 1
256.	___Order of the Sacred Torch	White	Summon Paladin	Ruth Thompson	Rare 1
257.	___Order of the White Shield	White	Summon Knights	Ruth Thompson	Uncommon 1
258.	___Pale Bears	Green	Summon Bears	Anthony Waters	Rare 1
259.	___Panic	Red	Instant	Mike Kimble	Common 1
260.	___Pentagram of the Ages	Artifact	Artifact	Douglas Shuler	Rare 1
261.	___Pestilence Rats	Black	Summon Rats	Jeff A. Menges	Common 1
262.	___Phantasmal Mount	Blue	Summon Phantasm	Melissa Benson	Uncommon 1
263.	___Pit Trap	Artifact	Artifact	Anson Maddocks	Uncommon 1
264.	___Plains	Land	Land	Christopher Rush	Land 6
265.	___Plains	Land	Land	Christopher Rush	Land 6
266.	___Plains	Land	Land	Christopher Rush	Land 7
267.	___Polar Kraken	Blue	Summon Kraken	Mark Tedin	Rare 1
268.	___Portent	Blue	Sorcery	Liz Danforth	Common 1
269.	___Power Sink	Blue	Interrupt	Mark Poole	Common 1
270.	___Pox	Black	Sorcery	Cornelius Brudi	Rare 1
271.	___Prismatic Ward	White	Enchant Creature	L.A. Williams	Common 1
272.	___Pygmy Allosaurus	Green	Summon Dinosaur	Anson Maddocks	Rare 1
273.	___Pyknite	Green	Summon Pyknite	Edward Beard, Jr.	Common 1
274.	___Pyroblast	Red	Interrupt	Kaja Foglio	Common 1
275.	___Pyroclasm	Red	Sorcery	Pat Morrissey	Uncommon 1
276.	___Rally	White	Instant	Heather Hudson	Common 1
277.	___Ray of Command	Blue	Instant	Harold McNeill	Common 1
278.	___Ray of Erasure	Blue	Instant	Mike Raabe	Common 1
279.	___Reality Twist	Blue	Enchantment	James Ernest	Rare 1
280.	___Reclamation	Multi-color	Enchantment	Dameon Willich	Rare 1
281.	___Red Scarab	White	Enchant Creature	Sandra Everingham	Uncommon 1
282.	___Regeneration	Green	Enchant Creature	Justin Hampton	Common 1
283.	___Rime Dryad	Green	Summon Dryad	Heather Hudson	Common 1



Illustration by Mark Tedin

	Card Name	Color	Type	Artist	Rarity
284. ___	Ritual of Subdual	Green	Enchantment	Justin Hampton	Rare 1
285. ___	River Delta	Land	Land	Sandra Everingham	Rare 1
286. ___	Runed Arch	Artifact	Artifact	Phil Foglio	Rare 1
287. ___	Sabretooth Tiger	Red	Summon Tiger	Melissa Benson	Common 1
288. ___	Sacred Boon	White	Instant	Mike Raabe	Uncommon 1
289. ___	Scaled Wurm	Green	Summon Wurm	Daniel Gelon	Common 1
290. ___	Sea Spirit	Blue	Summon Spirit	Rob Alexander	Uncommon 1
291. ___	Seizures	Black	Enchant Creature	Julie Baroh	Common 1
292. ___	Seraph	White	Summon Angel	Christopher Rush	Rare 1
293. ___	Shambling Strider	Green	Summon Strider	Douglas Shuler	Common 1
294. ___	Shatter	Red	Instant	Bryon Wackwitz	Common 1
295. ___	Shield Bearer	White	Summon Soldier	Dan Frazier	Common 1
296. ___	Shield of the Ages	Artifact	Artifact	Anson Maddocks	Uncommon 1
297. ___	Shyft	Blue	Summon Shyft	Richard Thomas	Rare 1
298. ___	Sibilant Spirit	Blue	Summon Spirit	Ron Spencer	Rare 1
399. ___	Silver Erne	Blue	Summon Erne	Melissa Benson	Uncommon 1
300. ___	Skeleton Ship	Multi-color	Summon Legend	Amy Weber & Tom Wänerstrand	Rare 1
301. ___	Skull Catapult	Artifact	Artifact	Bryon Wackwitz	Uncommon 1
302. ___	Sleight of Mind	Blue	Interrupt	Nicola Leonard	Uncommon 1
303. ___	Snow Devil	Blue	Enchant Creature	Ken Meyer, Jr.	Common 1
304. ___	Snow Fortress	Artifact	Artifact Creature	Jeff A. Menges	Rare 1
305. ___	Snow Hound	White	Summon Dog	Pat Morrissey	Uncommon 1
306. ___	Snow-Covered Forest	Land	Land	Pat Morrissey	Land 6
307. ___	Snow-Covered Island	Land	Land	Anson Maddocks	Land 6
308. ___	Snow-Covered Mountain	Land	Land	Tom Wänerstrand	Land 6
309. ___	Snow-Covered Plains	Land	Land	Christopher Rush	Land 6
310. ___	Snow-Covered Swamp	Land	Land	Douglas Shuler	Land 6
311. ___	Snowblind	Green	Enchant Creature	Douglas Shuler	Rare 1
312. ___	Snowfall	Blue	Enchantment	Phil Foglio	Common 1
313. ___	Soldevi Golem	Artifact	Artifact Creature	Anson Maddocks	Rare 1
314. ___	Soldevi Machinist	Blue	Summon Wizard	Jeff A. Menges	Uncommon 1
315. ___	Soldevi Simulacrum	Artifact	Artifact Creature	Dan Frazier	Uncommon 1
316. ___	Songs of the Damned	Black	Interrupt	Pete Venters	Common 1
317. ___	Soul Barrier	Blue	Enchantment	Harold McNeill	Uncommon 1
318. ___	Soul Burn	Black	Sorcery	Rob Alexander	Common 1
319. ___	Soul Kiss	Black	Enchant Creature	Nicola Leonard	Common 1
320. ___	Spectral Shield	Multi-color	Enchant Creature	Margaret Organ-Kean	Uncommon 1
321. ___	Spoils of Evil	Black	Interrupt	Quinton Hoover	Rare 1
322. ___	Spoils of War	Black	Sorcery	Pete Venters	Rare 1
323. ___	Staff of the Ages	Artifact	Artifact	Daniel Gelon	Rare 1
324. ___	Stampede	Green	Instant	Jeff A. Menges	Rare 1
325. ___	Stench of Evil	Black	Sorcery	Mark Tedin	Uncommon 1
326. ___	Stone Rain	Red	Sorcery	Kaja Foglio	Common 1
327. ___	Stone Spirit	Red	Summon Spirit	Jeff A. Menges	Uncommon 1
328. ___	Stonehands	Red	Enchant Creature	Dan Frazier	Common 1
329. ___	Storm Spirit	Multi-color	Summon Spirit	Pete Venters	Rare 1
330. ___	Stormbind	Multi-color	Enchantment	NéNé Thomas & Phillip Mosness	Rare 1
331. ___	Stromgald Cabal	Black	Summon Knights	Anson Maddocks	Rare 1
332. ___	Stunted Growth	Green	Sorcery	NéNé Thomas	Rare 1
333. ___	Sulfurous Springs	Land	Land	Phil Foglio	Rare 1



Illustration by Rob Alexander

	Card Name	Color	Type	Artist	Rarity
334.	___Sunstone	Artifact	Artifact	Phil Foglio	Uncommon 1
335.	___Swamp	Land	Land	Douglas Shuler	Land 6
336.	___Swamp	Land	Land	Douglas Shuler	Land 6
337.	___Swamp	Land	Land	Douglas Shuler	Land 6
338.	___Swords to Plowshares	White	Instant	Kaja Foglio	Uncommon 1
339.	___Tarpan	Green	Summon Tarpan	Margaret Organ-Kean	Common 1
340.	___Thermokarst	Green	Sorcery	Ken Meyer, Jr.	Uncommon 1
341.	___Thoughtleech	Green	Enchantment	Mark Tedin	Uncommon 1
342.	___Thunder Wall	Blue	Summon Wall	Richard Thomas	Uncommon 1
343.	___Timberline Ridge	Land	Land	Jeff A. Menges	Rare 1
344.	___Time Bomb	Artifact	Artifact	Amy Weber	Rare 1
345.	___Tinder Wall	Green	Summon Wall	Rick Emond	Common 1
346.	___Tor Giant	Red	Summon Giant	Douglas Shuler	Common 1
347.	___Total War	Red	Enchantment	Drew Tucker	Rare 1
348.	___Touch of Death	Black	Sorcery	Melissa Benson	Common 1
349.	___Touch of Vitae	Green	Instant	L.A. Williams	Uncommon 1
350.	___Trailblazer	Green	Instant	Julie Baroh	Rare 1
351.	___Underground River	Land	Land	NéNé Thomas	Rare 1
352.	___Updraft	Blue	Instant	L.A. Williams	Uncommon 1
353.	___Urza's Bauble	Artifact	Artifact	Christopher Rush	Uncommon 1
354.	___Veldt	Land	Land	Bryon Wackwitz	Rare 1
355.	___Venomous Breath	Green	Instant	L.A. Williams	Uncommon 1
356.	___Vertigo	Red	Instant	Drew Tucker	Uncommon 1
357.	___Vexing Arcanix	Artifact	Artifact	Randy Gallegos	Rare 1
358.	___Vibrating Sphere	Artifact	Artifact	Richard Thomas	Rare 1
359.	___Walking Wall	Artifact	Artifact Creature	Anthony Waters	Uncommon 1
360.	___Wall of Lava	Red	Summon Wall	Pete Venters	Uncommon 1
361.	___Wall of Pine Needles	Green	Summon Wall	Brian Snoddy	Uncommon 1
362.	___Wall of Shields	Artifact	Artifact Creature	Randy Gallegos	Uncommon 1
363.	___War Chariot	Artifact	Artifact	Dameon Willich	Uncommon 1
364.	___Warning	White	Instant	Pat Morrissey	Common 1
365.	___Whalebone Glider	Artifact	Artifact	Amy Weber	Uncommon 1
366.	___White Scarab	White	Enchant Creature	Phil Foglio	Uncommon 1
367.	___Whiteout	Green	Instant	NéNé Thomas	Uncommon 1
368.	___Wiitigo	Green	Summon Wiitigo	Melissa Benson	Rare 1
369.	___Wild Growth	Green	Enchant Land	Mike Raabe	Common 1
370.	___Wind Spirit	Blue	Summon Spirit	Kaja Foglio	Uncommon 1
371.	___Wings of Aesthir	Multi-color	Enchant Creature	Edward Beard, Jr.	Uncommon 1
372.	___Winter's Chill	Blue	Instant	Edward Beard, Jr.	Rare 1
373.	___Withering Wisps	Black	Enchantment	NéNé Thomas	Uncommon 1
374.	___Woolly Mammoths	Green	Summon Mammoths	Dan Frazier	Common 1
375.	___Woolly Spider	Green	Summon Spider	Daniel Gelon	Common 1
376.	___Word of Blasting	Red	Instant	Ken Meyer, Jr.	Uncommon 1
377.	___Word of Undoing	Blue	Instant	Christopher Rush	Common 1
378.	___Wrath of Marit Lage	Blue	Enchantment	Mike Raabe	Rare 1
379.	___Yavimaya Gnats	Green	Summon Insects	Dan Frazier	Uncommon 1
380.	___Zur's Weirding	Blue	Enchantment	Liz Danforth	Rare 1
381.	___Zuran Enchanter	Blue	Summon Wizard	Douglas Shuler	Common 1
382.	___Zuran Orb	Artifact	Artifact	Sandra Everingham	Uncommon 1
383.	___Zuran Spellcaster	Blue	Summon Wizard	Edward Beard, Jr.	Common 1





Illustrations by Drew Tucker and Kaja Foglio

Please take a few moments to fill out this survey about *The Duelist*™.

All completed surveys received on or before September 30, 1995 will be entered into a random drawing. 200 winners will receive two foreign-edition ***Magic: The Gathering*** *cards. One entry per person. Void where prohibited.*

How would you rate the articles in this issue of *The Duelist* ?

Rating:	Best I've Read	Worth Reading	I've Read Better	It was terrible!
Letters (p. 6-7)	❑	❑	❑	❑
Brief History of Magic™ (p. 8-9)	❑	❑	❑	❑
M:TG—Chronicles ™ (p. 10-11)	❑	❑	❑	❑
A Guided Tour of *Ice Age* (p. 12-13)	❑	❑	❑	❑
Meet the "East Coasters" (p. 14-16)	❑	❑	❑	❑
Cantrips (p. 18-19)	❑	❑	❑	❑
Murk Dwellers (p. 20-22)	❑	❑	❑	❑
At Issue (p. 22)	❑	❑	❑	❑
Excuse Me, Mr. Suitcase? (p. 24-25)	❑	❑	❑	❑
Elements of Deck Building (p. 25-28)	❑	❑	❑	❑
Cluster Decks (p. 29-31)	❑	❑	❑	❑
Anatomy of a Sealed Deck (p. 36-38)	❑	❑	❑	❑
Icy Manipulator (p. 39-41)	❑	❑	❑	❑
Have I Got A Game For You (p. 44-45)	❑	❑	❑	❑
Magic in the Netherlands (p. 46-48)	❑	❑	❑	❑
Magic: The Accessories (p. 50-53)	❑	❑	❑	❑
House Rules (p. 58-59)	❑	❑	❑	❑
WotC Picks (p. 60-61)	❑	❑	❑	❑
Convocation News (p. 62)	❑	❑	❑	❑
Strange New Worlds (p. 63)	❑	❑	❑	❑
Lost in the Shuffle (p. 68-69)	❑	❑	❑	❑
Bringing Visions to Life: Everway™ (p. 70-71)	❑	❑	❑	❑
Phil and Dixie (p. 72-73)	❑	❑	❑	❑
Artist Announcements (p. 74-76)	❑	❑	❑	❑
Talking with Rob Alexander (p. 77-82)	❑	❑	❑	❑
WotC News (pp. 86-89)	❑	❑	❑	❑
The Diviner (p. 90-91)	❑	❑	❑	❑
Designers' Notes and TCG Reports (p. 92-95)	❑	❑	❑	❑
SimCity™ Review (p. 100-101)	❑	❑	❑	❑
Rage™ Review (p. 102-103)	❑	❑	❑	❑
Shadowfist™ Review (p. 104-105)	❑	❑	❑	❑
Magic: The Puzzling (p. 110-113)	❑	❑	❑	❑
Magic Tricks (p. 114-116)	❑	❑	❑	❑
M:TG—*Ice Age* Card List (p. 121-128)	❑	❑	❑	❑
Deckmaster™ Rulings and Errata (p. 130-132)	❑	❑	❑	❑

What I liked most:_____

What I disliked most:_____

2. How would you rate this issue?

Rating:	Great	Good	OK	Awful
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Gaming issues coverage	❑	❑	❑	❑
Tournament coverage	❑	❑	❑	❑
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Card lists	❑	❑	❑	❑
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4. What would you like to see in future issues of *The Duelist?*

_____

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6. How informative is *The Duelist* compared to other sources of information about trading card game products?

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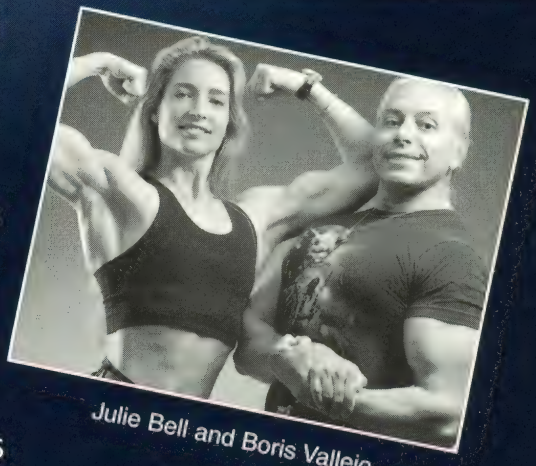
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RULINGS & ERRATA

GENERAL RULINGS

The following rulings are meant to clarify the rulebook, how **Magic** in general works, and how to read certain classes of cards:



1) If my Giant Wasp dies, do I get to use my Soul Net? The "Token" entry in the new, *Fourth Edition* glossary seems to say I can't.

The new glossary is confusing on this point. Token creatures can actually be sent to the graveyard, but they are only momentarily placed there before being removed from the game; hence, token creatures sent to the graveyard generate effects that are triggered by creatures being put in the graveyard.

2) Can I regenerate a creature that isn't dying, just to tap it?

No. Regeneration effects always target the "death" of a creature, so only creatures on their way to the graveyard may be regenerated. In addition to targeting the death of a creature, regeneration effects also target the creature itself if the card says so (for example, Death Ward also targets the creature).

3) The Regeneration from *Ice Age* says "When Regeneration comes into play, choose target creature." Does this mean that I choose its target when it resolves instead of when I play it?

No. This wording appears on those *Ice Age* enchantments whose only ability is a fast effect. The particular wording was created for these cards to make sure that every card that is targeted says so; it is not meant to override the rules. This turns out to be confusing, however, so it is best to ignore the "When this card comes into play" clause on the following *Ice Age* enchantments: Caribou Range, Earthlore, Forbidden Lore, Hot Springs, Mystic Might, Regeneration, and Soul Kiss.

If an enchantment specifies that you must control its target (e.g., Earthlore), and you lose control of the target, the enchantment is buried.

4) The new Drain Life says that I get life based on the damage "dealt" by the spell, which seems to mean that I would get life even if the damage is prevented. Is this right?

This question is another example of changes in the systematic wording of cards with similar effects. Cards such as Drain Life count up damage successfully dealt by some source, often themselves. In the past this was referred to as "damage done"; now it is referred to simply as "damage dealt." This is just a wording change, not a functional change.

5) Can I use an effect like Millstone or Visions on a library that doesn't have enough cards in it? For example, can I use Millstone on a library with one card?

Such effects will work on libraries that don't have enough cards in them. If Millstone is used on a one-card library, that card is put into the graveyard. If Visions is used on a three-card library, you examine those three cards and then decide whether to shuffle them or not. Forcing a player to draw more cards than are in his library will still cause him to lose.

TAPPING LANDS FOR MANA

To decide what sort of mana is provided when a land is tapped for mana, first decide what type of land is being tapped. Use that to determine the amount and type of mana it produces. Note that effects that increase the mana output of a land are generally triggered effects, activating whenever a land is tapped for mana. These effects do not directly change the amount of mana the land can potentially provide.

If Conversion and Mana Flare are in play, all mountains (which have become basic plains due to Conversion) provide ✹✹ when tapped for mana, as do all "real" plains. The "appropriate mana" of a land is determined by the process outlined above.

If Conversion and Reality Twist are in play, Conversion is always applied first since it changes the land type, whereas Reality Twist affects the type of mana produced by a land. All plains and mountains which have become plains due to Conversion therefore provide red mana. The "appropriate type" of mana for plains in this case is red, not white, so if Reality Twist and Mana Flare are in play, tapping a plains for mana provides ✹✹, not ✹✹.

Spot illustrations by Doug Shuler
Backgrounds by Doug Shuler and Amy Weber

Infernal Darkness and Deep Water cause all affected mana-producing lands to simply provide ☠ or ♦ respectively, regardless of the amount and type of mana the land normally provides. So Infernal Darkness will cause a Mishra's Workshop (tap to add three colorless mana to your mana pool; this mana can only be used to cast artifacts) to provide ☠ when tapped for mana, and this mana is not subject to the Workshop's restriction.

Ritual of Subdual simply converts the mana produced by a land to colorless, so a Mishra's Workshop will produce three normal colorless mana while Ritual of Subdual is in play.

Tapping a storage land for mana while Infernal Darkness is in play will always give you just ☠, regardless of the number of counters removed from the land (even if zero counters are removed). Tapping a storage land for mana while Ritual of Subdual is in play yields an amount of colorless mana equal to the number of storage counters removed.

REVERSALS

The following rulings reverse past rulings from the design team, past issues of *The Duelist*, and/or netreps:

1) Now that Black Vise is targeted, is it possible to use Reflecting Mirror to retarget the Vise to its caster?

Reflecting Mirror can only redirect the target spell to a valid target. Because Black Vise says "target opponent," the caster cannot be legally targeted. Note that you can never use Reflecting Mirror on Siren's Call, since you are the only player that can attack during your turn.



2) My opponent played Creature Bond on my Personal Incarnation and then Terrored it. Do I suffer the Creature Bond damage before or after losing half my life?

You would lose half your life before assessing the Creature Bond damage. Both effects are triggered by the death of the Personal Incarnation, and any damage or destruction resulting from a series of triggered effects will wait until all of the effects have resolved. Since the death of the Personal Incarnation causes loss of life, a damage-prevention step isn't necessary for it to resolve; the Creature Bond, on the other hand, causes damage, and must wait until all other effects have resolved to allow for a damage-prevention step.

3) Is Animate Dead considered a creature enchantment?

Yes. If you play Animate Dead on Bartel Runeaxe, the enchantment will be buried by Bartel's ability as soon as he enters play and Bartel will return to the graveyard. If you play Animate Dead on a Rabid Wombat, it would get the +2/+2 bonus for having an enchantment, but would also gets -1/0 from Animate Dead (giving it a total modifier of +1/+2).

4) Can the effect of Chaos Orb be stopped by Disenchant?

Yes, if it is cast in response to the Chaos Orb's effect. Originally, Chaos Orb was considered sacrificed when its effect was used, but this proved to be problematic if, for example, it gets shuffled back into the library before its effect resolves (for instance, with Feldon's Cane). So Chaos Orb is considered to stay in play when its effect is used. When the effect resolves, you take the Chaos Orb from play, flip it, and then place it in the graveyard (and this may not be prevented by any means). If Disenchant is cast in response to the Chaos Orb's effect, Disenchant will resolve first, removing Chaos Orb from play; if Chaos Orb is no longer in play when its effect attempts to resolve, the effect does nothing. This is a case of "Do A to do B," not a case of the effect happening in spite of the source being removed.

5) Suppose I have a Wooden Sphere in play when my opponent casts a Lightning Bolt. Later, I use Sleight of Mind to change Wooden Sphere so it gives life for red spells. Can I get a life for that Lightning Bolt?

You can only use an ability such as Wooden Sphere's if the ability applied at the time the spell was successfully cast as well as at the time the ability is used. In this case, the ability can't be used because the text on Wooden Sphere said "green" when the Lightning Bolt was cast.

CARD ERRATA

1) What happens if I play Farrel's Mantle on a creature, and my opponent steals the creature? If it attacks me and isn't blocked, can it deal damage to me and still use the Mantle's ability?

No. Farrel's Mantle should be read as saying "defending player" instead of "opponent."

2) If I play a creature while Concordant Crossroads is in play, can I use the creature's ability on my opponent's following turn?

Yes. Concordant Crossroads should be read as if it eliminated "summoning sickness" completely.

3) The *Fourth Edition* and *Ice Age* versions of Wild Growth say that mana from Wild Growth is always added to my mana pool. Is this true even when it's on one of my opponent's lands?

No. Wild Growth always adds its mana to the mana pool of the land's controller (and it only provides mana when the target land is tapped for mana). This applies to all versions of Wild Growth.

4) What happens if I play Hecatomb (from *Ice Age*) but don't have four creatures to sacrifice?

The first line of Hecatomb should be read as saying "When Hecatomb comes into play, sacrifice four creatures or bury Hecatomb." If you do not have four creatures when it comes into play, you don't sacrifice any of them and Hecatomb is buried.

5) When I cast Recall, can I choose Recall as one of the cards in my hand to sacrifice, and then remove it from the game once it's in the graveyard?

Recall should be read as follows: "Choose and discard X cards from your hand to take X target cards from your graveyard and put them into your hand. Remove Recall from the game."

You choose the cards when Recall is played, before it would

be possible to counter it. If it is countered, then you keep the cards you chose to discard, since the effect never resolves. If it turns out that some of the cards chosen to be discarded are missing when the effect resolves, you discard the rest of the chosen cards as described but don't get any cards back from the graveyard. If Recall fizzles on one of the target cards in the graveyard, it will work normally on the others as with any multi-targeted effect. If it fizzles with respect to all targets in the graveyard, Recall fails completely; it is placed in the graveyard instead of being removed from the game, and you don't discard anything.

If players are concerned about their opponent cheating by deciding which cards to discard when the effect resolves, they should agree on keeping track of which cards are to be discarded. For example, the cards a player has chosen to discard can be kept separate from the rest of the hand until the effect resolves.

6) Can I play Forbidden Lore on an opponent's land?

No. The first line of Forbidden Lore should be read as "Choose target land you control."

SPECIFIC CARD RULINGS

1) Can I use Sleight of Mind to change a Kobold's color?

If a card specifies its own color in the text, that text can be changed by Sleight of Mind but this will not actually change the card's color. For example, if Sleight of Mind is used to change the text:

- Dark Heart of the Wood would still be black and green
- Crookshank Kobolds would still be red
- Fork would still be red

2) Suppose I have Gaea's Touch in play and I play a forest. Later in my turn I draw a mountain. Can I say the forest was the "additional land" for the turn, and play the mountain?

If you play a forest while Gaea's Touch is in play, you must say whether or not it is the "additional forest" for the turn. If you do say this, then this uses up the additional land provided by the Gaea's Touch, and you would still be able to play the normal land for the turn, even if Gaea's Touch later leaves play.

3) Suppose I attack with a creature such as Floral Spuzzem or Farrel's Zealot and I use its ability. What happens if the target of the effect disappears or becomes invalid—does my creature still deal damage that combat?

Because the effect fizzled against the target, the entire effect would fail and the creature would still deal damage (unless of course it was sacrificed as part of the effect's cost, e.g. Necrite). These abilities can only be used once per combat, so you don't get to try again.

4) Can I play Reverse Damage even if I haven't taken any damage that turn?

Yes, since the card does not target damage. However, this only applies to effects that retroactively collect damage from an entire turn; strict redirection effects such as Reverberation can only be used if an appropriate source is actually dealing damage.



5) Worms of the Earth says "No new land may be brought into play." I'm not sure what that means. Can you give a few examples?

Suppose an animated land is taken out of play with Tawnos's Coffin, then Worms of the Earth is put into play, and then Tawnos's Coffin is destroyed. The land is not considered a "new land," since it existed before Worms of the Earth did, so the land is not prevented from returning to play.

If Safe Haven is sacrificed while Worms is in play, animated lands that were taken out of play by Safe Haven are destroyed. The distinction between Safe Haven and Tawnos's Coffin is that Safe Haven just removes its target from the game, whereas a creature "suspended" by the Coffin is only considered out of play.

Effects such as Untamed Wilds can't be used to put land into play while Worms of the Earth is in play. The spell can be cast, but the land would remain in the library, which is then reshuffled as specified by the effect.

6) Does the life I get from Soul Burn depend on how much damage is successfully dealt?

No. Unlike Drain Life, the life gain from Soul Burn depends on how many ☠ you spend on dealing damage, not on how much damage is successfully dealt. (So even if damage is prevented, you would have still gained life when the effect resolved.)

7) If I move a Krovikan Fetish from one creature to another with Crown of the Ages, do I get to draw a card?

Whoever controls the Fetish will get to draw a card. When you move an enchantment around, all effects that occurred when it first entered play occur again. Similarly, you would draw a card if you copied Pyknite with Clone.

8) Can I play Kjeldoran Dead if I have no creatures in play?

Yes, but if there are no creatures in play when Kjeldoran Dead enters play, it must be sacrificed. The same principle applies to Glacial Chasm.

SNOW-COVERED LANDS

The following effects just change a land's type, not whether a land is snow-covered: Conversion, Cyclopean Tomb, Evil Presence, Gaea's Liege, Illusionary Terrain, Phantasmal Terrain, and Thelonite Monk.

Land Tax, Nature's Lore, and Untamed Wilds can retrieve snow-covered lands from the library.

Magical Hack cannot add or remove the word "snow-covered."

Blood Moon does not affect snow-covered basic lands.

Goblin Caves and Goblin Shrine provide their bonuses if cast on snow-covered mountains.

The second ability of Arcum's Weathervane cannot target multi-lands.

Shanodin Dryads' forestwalk applies to snow-covered forests, but Rime Dryads' snow-covered forestwalk does not apply to non-snow-covered forests.

Snow-covered forests can count as the additional forest for Gaea's Touch.

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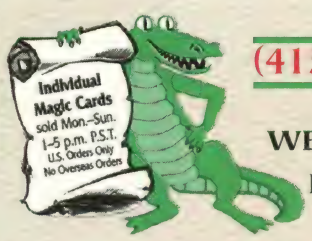
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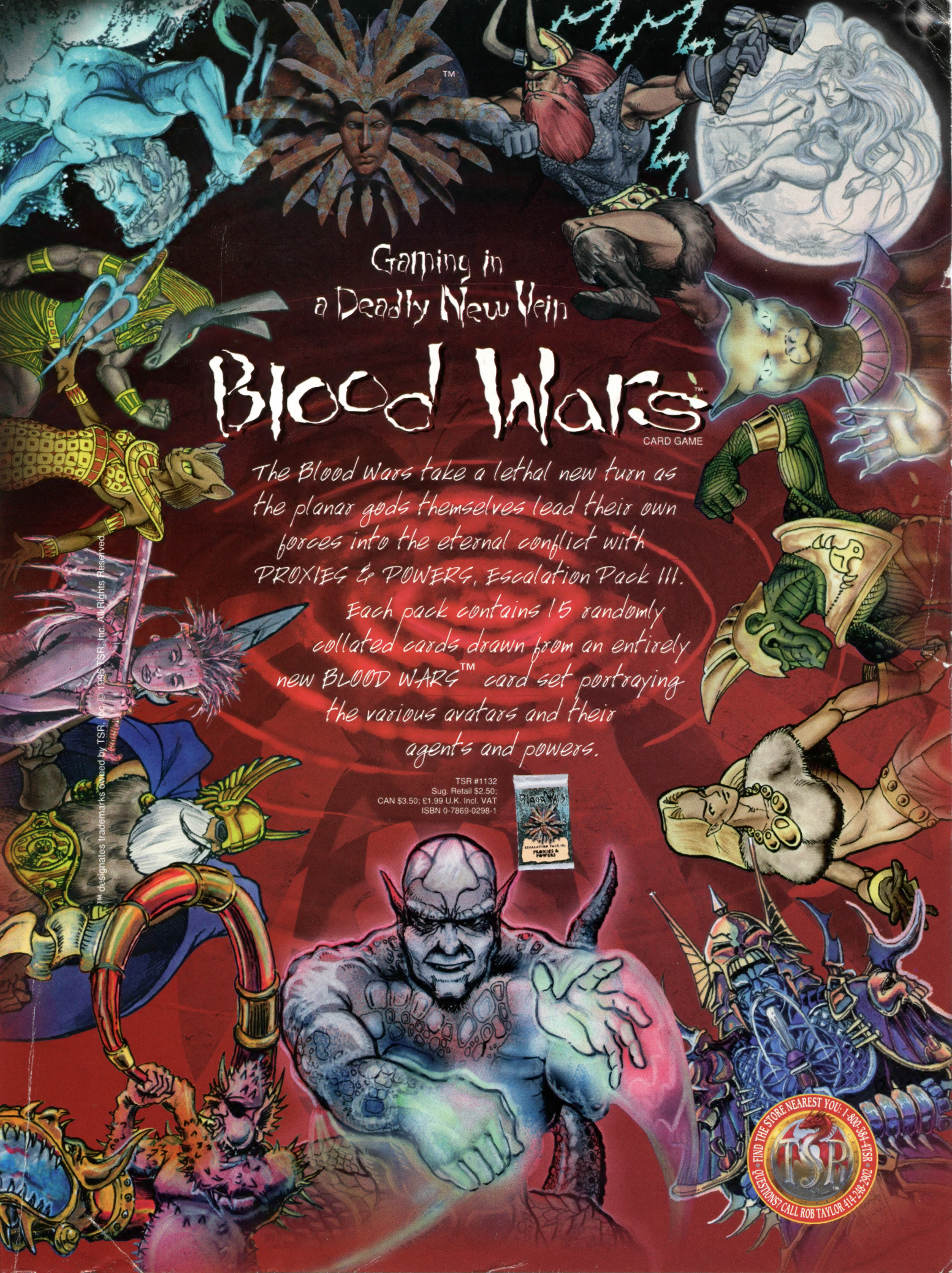
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